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ABSTRACT

This document, published by the Office of Refugee Services, Department of Social Services, describes a study of the cultural conflicts and other difficulties experienced by Indochinese children and their families during their assimilation into the North American culture. Following an introductory overview of the study's objectives and methodology, Chapter I provides the major conclusions drawn from the study and discusses major future salient issues or important unresolved problems. Salient issues are discussed in terms of refugee children and their families, human services/welfare dependency, the performance of voluntary agencies, and federal management, policies, and programs. In order to gain some perspective on how difficult it is for Indochinese children to adjust to American culture, several key elements of the environment in their native countries are discussed in Chapter II. Cross-cultural differences and the resulting cultural conflicts for the children, as gleaned from the literature, are also described in Chapter II, along with the rationale, method, and findings of a survey conducted with Indochinese refugees. Finally, the conditions surrounding the refugees' departure from their native countries, the time spent in refugee camps, resettlement in the United States, problems and conflicts of the new arrivals, the programs designed to ameliorate these problems, and the characteristics of refugees receiving assistance are discussed in Chapter III. Copies of the questionnaires used to generate information concerning Indochinese children's problems and education are appended. (Author/MP)

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THE ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION OF INDOCHINESE CHILDREN INTO AMERICAN CULTURE

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AUGUST 1980

Prepared by
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Office of Refugee Services
Department of Social Services



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor
HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY
Mario G. Obledo, Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Marion J. Woods, Director

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PROLOGUE

Inscribed in bronze on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty nearly one hundred years ago is the poem "The New Colossus", written by Emma Lazarus. The poem depicts a mighty woman with a torch lighting the way for refugees to come to this country. At the end of the poem this "Mother of Exiles" exclaims "... with silent lips:"

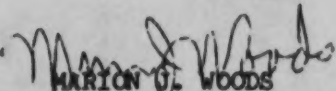
Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-torn to me.
I left my lamp beside the golden door!

Americans can be justifiably proud of their long and humanitarian heritage of resettling refugees in this country. In today's world of turmoil the need is as great as ever before, and the United States continues to be the leader in providing refuge to the oppressed and persecuted.

For a multitude of reasons, many of these persons have chosen to make California their home. Since the spring of 1975, a veritable flood of persons from Indochina have resettled in this state. Our public and private institutions have been taxed to the maximum in attempting to assist men, women, and children to gain the basic necessities and to rebuild their lives in a completely new environment. I am committed to assisting them in the achievement of this goal.

I commissioned this report to determine the extent of cultural conflicts facing Indochinese refugee children. This information will permit the State Department of Social Services to play a major role in improving resettlement policies and programs which have a direct impact on children and their families.

This report chronicles the remarkable and substantial success of refugee children in coping with a new environment, and concludes that there is a great deal of hope for the future. It is in this vein that I will pursue continuing efforts on their behalf.


MARION J. WOODS
Director

SPECIAL AUTHOR'S NOTE

First, I wish to thank Marion J. Woods, Director of the State Department of Social Services (DSS), for requesting this report. This project was challenging and demanding, interesting and rewarding.

Such a large undertaking was possible because of the assistance and support of a large number of persons. The project respondents made a unique contribution by adding new information to this vital area. All respondents (except the few who requested to remain anonymous) are listed in the appendices, and I owe a special debt of gratitude to each of them. I also want to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of many state department and agency staff - these persons are also listed in the appendices.

Special thanks are owed to several persons. First and foremost, I want to thank Mary Trowe, Planning and Development Branch Secretary who acted unofficially as my administrative assistant. Mary scheduled appointments, typed the survey questionnaires, manipulated data, constructed and typed tables, and did many other tasks too numerous to list. Andy Molina and Lee Davis, both of the Office of Refugee Services, were very generous in sharing their program expertise with me. In addition, Lee provided me with the raw data from the unaccompanied minors survey. Carolyn Easton and staff of the Case Reports Section, Statistical Services Branch, manipulated data from the unaccompanied minors survey and constructed working tables. They also conducted the telephone portion of our original survey and tallied and summarized these data.

Three persons performed the significant function of reviewing the first draft of this report: Andy Molina, Lee Davis, and Bob Leslie, Chief of the Specialized Programs Bureau. Their review improved the final product. Lorraine Mettler, Supervisor of the Office Services Section, assumed the monumental responsibility for the typing and processing of this report. And finally, the understanding and support of my wife, Marianne, and children, Adam and Adina, when it was necessary to go out of town on field trips and work many extra hours, made my task considerably easier.

All pictures were taken in California schools during May, 1980. When generating this report, I was employed by the Long Range Planning Bureau, DSS. This report was slightly modified prior to the second printing in March, 1981.

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INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Marion J. Woods, Director of the California Department of Social Services (DSS) authorized a report concerning the cultural conflicts that Indochinese children have in assimilating into American culture. Mr. Woods requested that the field of education be emphasized and that information be provided by country of origin, when possible.

This mandate provided the impetus for the generation of the rather comprehensive project from which this report was produced. Upon reflection, it became obvious

that children could not be treated independently of the families with which most of them live. If the family does not have the resources to "make ends meet," if the wage earner(s) are unemployed or underemployed, if depression or other symptoms of mental dysfunctioning are being manifested, etc., clearly the children will be affected.

In addition, it became obvious that children could not be investigated with respect to their functioning in the United States without considering their functioning in their country of origin and what they had experienced in refugee camps. In short, the focus and scope of the project kept expanding to permit a thorough explanation of the project objective: an assessment of what cultural conflicts and other difficulties that Indochinese children are having in assimilating into American culture.

Although the phrase "Indochinese children" is used frequently in this report, it should be remembered that a great diversity exists in the backgrounds, languages/dialects, and customs of persons from this part of the world. In Vietnam, for example, the national/ethnic backgrounds of persons include Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, Cham, and Montagnard. Examples of languages spoken by refugee students from Vietnam are Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Lao, and Cambodian.

Similarly, there are many different national/ethnic backgrounds of persons from Cambodia (e.g., Cambodian, Chinese, Lao, Thai) and from Laos (e.g., Lao, Lao Hmong, Lao Teung, Lao Kha). Also, a large number of languages/dialects are spoken in Cambodia (e.g., Cambodian, Lao, Thai, Chinese) and in Laos (Lao, Lao Hmong, Lao Yao).

It should also be noted that an equal amount of information regarding these various groups does not exist. Since the overwhelming proportion of refugees who have resettled in the United States are Vietnamese, most of the available information concerns this group. However, we did include information for the other groups when it was available.

METHODOLOGY

Two distinct project phases were designed: (1) data/information collection and (2) report generation. The first phase also had two major components depending on whether (1) readily available information or (2) new data were collected. Existing information was collected from two major sources: written materials (books, journals, congressional hearings, etc.) which the California State Library located by conducting computer searches and by interviews with program experts at state agencies with responsibilities for refugees. New data were collected by personal and telephone interviews with educators, school administrators, social services administrators, and persons providing services to the refugee population. (A more thorough description of the methodology employed in collecting the new data is given later in this report.)

The report generation phase also consisted of two components. Written materials were analyzed and reviewed and abstracts were written. The process was more involved for the new data: The data were extracted from the survey questionnaires and entered on tally sheets, statistical tables were constructed, and the data were analyzed and interpreted.

DESCRIPTION OF REPORT

The report has three major chapters and appendices, in addition to this introduction. The titles of the chapters, with a brief description of content, follow. The chapters are organized in priority order to increase the usefulness of the report to busy readers.

Chapter 1. Conclusions and Future Salient Issues

An enumeration of the major conclusions which can be discerned from this report comprise this section. The "Salient Issues" section contains a discussion of many of the major unresolved problems in this area. Although the generation of recommendations was not a major objective of this report, many recommendations naturally "fell out", and others are implicit in presenting the issues.

Chapter 2. Refugee Children's Assimilation and Acculturation

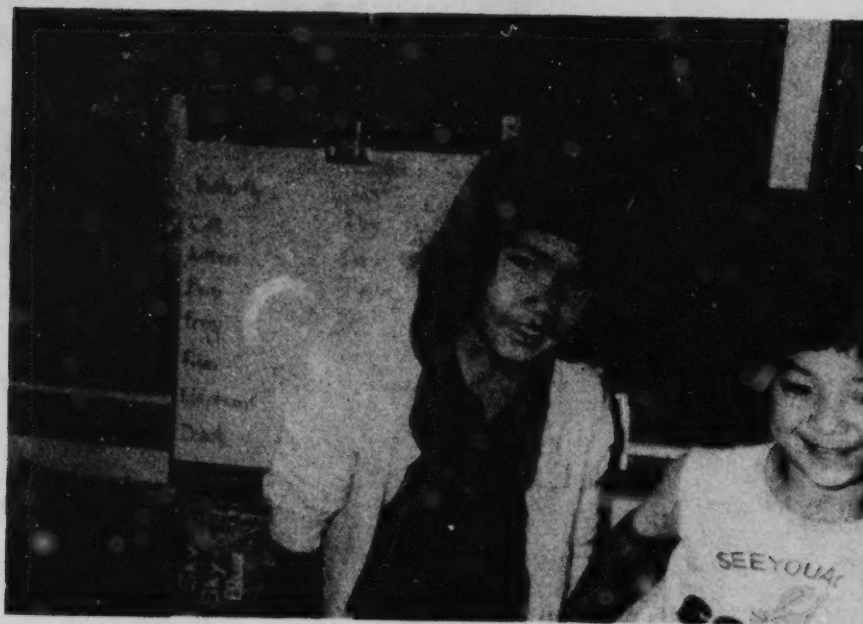
In order to gain some perspective on how difficult it is for the children to adjust to American culture, several key elements of the environment in their native country are discussed. Cross-cultural differences and the resulting cultural conflicts for the children, as gleaned from the professional literature, are covered. Problems and conflicts relating to education were emphasized by considering them separately. The rationale, method, and findings of our original survey are then given. As part of the

survey, respondents were asked to give resolutions to cultural conflicts, and these recommendations are enumerated. A discussion of the Unaccompanied Minors Survey, conducted by the DSS, concludes this chapter.

Chapter 3. Background

Basically, this chapter provides a backdrop for the investigation of the report's objective. The conditions surrounding the refugee's departure from the native country, time spent in refugee camps, resettlement in the United States, problems and conflicts of the new arrivals, the programs designed to ameliorate these problems, and characteristics of refugees receiving assistance are all discussed.

Finally, it should be recognized that no readily assembled body of literature exists concerning Indochinese refugee children. By compiling this report, and presenting new data, we have filled this gap. We hope that this endeavor will influence policy makers, program administrators, and service providers to ameliorate cultural conflicts adversely impacting refugee children.



CHAPTER 1. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE SALIENT ISSUES

CONCLUSIONS

Addressing the National Organizations Advisory Council for Children Conference in Los Angeles, on May 7, 1980, Rabbi Steven Jacobs, Chairman of the Citizen's Advisory Committee to the Governor's Task Force on Indochinese Refugees said that history has demonstrated that the world does not take care of refugees. Bringing his discourse up to contemporary times, he commented, "There is an epidemic of dehumanization in the world today". To some extent this pessimism is reflected in this report. Although refugee families and the agencies which serve them have a multitude of problems, sometimes irremedial problems, the families are integrating better than expected. Certainly the children are assimilating faster than their parents. And, when children are involved, there is always hope.

The conclusions in this section are organized around and follow the same sequence as the major content areas of the report. Some of the most critical conclusions are discussed in some detail in the last section of this chapter, "Salient Issues". Although the following enumeration of conclusions is quite extensive, it is by no means complete, and does not capture the rich detail of the material presented elsewhere in this report.

Refugee Children's Assimilation and Acculturation

- o Although there are many similarities between the geography and cultures of the countries of origin for Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian children, contrasts with the Western culture of the United States are extreme.
- o In comparison to the earlier arrivals (1975-76), more recently arriving Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and other Indochinese children and adolescents in general had a slower transition to western culture because of: (1) several years under Communism, (2) no schooling in some of the countries for five years, (3) poorer physical condition on arrival, (4) long camp stays, (5) some differences in the educational and socioeconomic levels of their parents, and (6) psychological traumas since 1975.
- o All children/youth have suffered profoundly:
 - Very young infants (under six months of age) may be without memories of their countries of origin or of the dangers, the difficult journeys, or the atrocities witnessed. They may continue to suffer the effects of

malnutrition and multiple illnesses. Their adjustments will be primarily a function of their refugee parents.

- Young children will have unique psychological adjustments to make varying as a function of age on arrival, as well as difficulties in adjusting to United States schools.
- Adolescents will face the usual identity problems of adolescence, plus the additional problem of being Asians in America; they may also have school adjustment problems.
- o Although Vietnamese students probably will have an easier time learning English than Cambodian or Laotian children (because Vietnamese is written with Latin letters) significant differences exist between Vietnamese and English.
- o Unaccompanied minors have special problems which make their assimilation more difficult than youth living with their families.
- o Indochinese youth are not yet showing up in California's official crime statistics, although a few have been convicted of crime recently.
- o The following are some of the cultural and educational differences resulting in possible or actual problems for Vietnamese students: different order of names, exhibiting shyness, intense parental pressure to study more and have a shorter time for play, respect for age, different expectations at home versus at school, and "passive" learning style resulting in reluctance to ask questions in deference to authority of teachers.

- o In general, Indochinese students are adjusting well, despite all their problems--this success is causing problems at home, since parents are not adjusting as quickly as are their children (and are not as proficient in English, American customs, etc.)

- o The following conclusions were gleaned from our original survey:
 - Concerning the most critical areas of possible cultural conflict for Indochinese students:
 - (1) Language differences were judged to be of first importance and different rates of assimilation between parents and children were less frequently thought to be of primary importance.
 - (2) Cultural differences in learning and education were the most frequent area judged to be of secondary importance.
 - (3) Difficulties in social relationships were thought to be the area of third most importance.
 - Better guidelines for welfare, health, and mental health programs were thought to be a critical problem.
 - The typical children's assimilation into American culture was thought to be good or extremely good (by 63 percent of the respondents), although Indochinese respondents had more positive opinions. Respondents felt that Vietnamese children had made a much better assimilation than Cambodian and

Laotian children, and Cambodian children were felt to be adjusting slightly better than Laotian children.

- The following items were considered to be always or usually problems for Indochinese students: incorrect grade placement, general confusion about American educational system, children not having official school records when arriving in the United States, and sex education in California schools (which is not taught in Indochinese schools).
- The children's integration into American schools was thought to be at least "good" (by 61 percent of the respondents), with Indochinese respondents responding a little more positively than non-Indochinese respondents.
- The children's success in American schools was judged to be at least "good" (by 86 percent of the respondents); thus, it can be concluded that respondents felt that children were succeeding academically at a higher rate than they were integrating.
- Among the reasons given for the children's academic success were the following: hard work, discipline, motivation, infrequent participation in extracurricular activities, and parental pressure/family honor.
- Students are reported to be having both positive and negative impact on public schools, with the positive (such as employment of bilingual low-income aides) having a decided edge over the negative (such as crowded schools).

- o It can be concluded from the Unaccompanied Minors Survey that:
 - The typical unaccompanied minor is a male between 16 and 18 years of age, is being provided foster care by a Indochinese family, has satisfactory relations with adults and peers, is in good physical health and without emotional problems, requires training in English, is doing well in school and plans to continue his education.
 - Major problems for the typical minor are inadequate social assimilation, language, health, and dental; ESL classes, medical, and support services are necessary to alleviate these problems.

Background

- o The refugee flow from Indochina will continue.
- o In comparison with other countries, the United States is certainly doing its share in accepting and resettling refugees.
- o The Public Health Service excludes a very small percentage (4 percent) of refugees from entering the United States for medical reasons.
- o The voluntary agencies--Volags--delegated by the State Department to resettle refugees have done a remarkable job in finding sponsors and resettling refugees, although some have demonstrated serious shortcomings and, to some extent, may be contributing to welfare dependency.

- o The American public generally has/had negative attitudes toward Indochinese refugees, and some incidents involving discrimination of and violence toward refugees have occurred.
- o The impact of refugees on the country's population growth and on the labor market has been/will be small.
- o Refugees are heavily concentrated in four states: California (33 percent), Texas (10 percent), Pennsylvania (4 percent), and Washington (4 percent).
- o Many refugees initially resettled in other states, move to California because of the climate, the availability of jobs, family reunification, and for other reasons.
- o In California, refugees are heavily concentrated in five counties, three in southern California--Los Angeles (35 percent), Orange (20 percent), and San Diego (11 percent) and two in northern California--San Francisco (11 percent) and Santa Clara (8 percent).
- o Because of extreme cultural differences between East and West, culture shock has been a pervasive phenomenon.
- o For all Indochinese groups, the newer arrivals have a much more difficult time integrating into American society compared to early arrivals because most of them have had less education and less employment experience, and have suffered years under Communism plus atrocities and long stays in overcrowded refugee camps.

- o Important needs of refugees include English training; employment/vocational counselling and training; a legal status which does not preclude education, employment, training, and other opportunities; adequate low-cost housing; available bilingual-bicultural physical and mental health services/programs; orientation to American society; and a social support system.
- o Many federal programs exist to assist refugees--all of them have serious shortcomings in coverage, administration and/or funding.
- o Bilingual education is essential to transition children into regular ("mainstream") classrooms and into society in general--relatively few of those in need are receiving bilingual education.
- o Characteristics of IRAP recipients, over time, indicate changes toward continued welfare dependency.
- o Although new arrivals spend more time on welfare than early arrivals, some early arrivals--from the middle and upper socioeconomic classes in Indochina--are having considerable difficulty leaving IRAP and becoming self-sufficient.

FUTURE SALIENT ISSUES (RECOMMENDATIONS)

This last section of Chapter 1 contains major future salient issues or important unresolved problems. Recommendations are usually presented in an explicit or implicit form in the discussion of the issue. Issues are organized in the following categories: (a) refugee children and their families, (b) human

services/welfare dependency, (c) Volag performance, (d) federal management, policies, and programs. It should be noted, however, that some overlap does exist among the categories--they are not mutually exclusive.

A. REFUGEE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

o Future Psychiatric/Psychological Service Requirements of Refugee Children and Adolescents

Profound starvation of the land refugees' children might lead to developmental problems, even mental retardation in profoundly undernourished infants. The psychological consequence of total food deprivation in very young children may result in very unusual responses to food for the remainder of the child's life. Obsessions with food or oral fixations leading to alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking, etc., may be manifested. In addition, progress through the normal psychosexual stages of development may be inhibited or retarded, and interference with normal interpersonal relationships may occur. Identity crises for some early adolescents will be severe and may lead to various behavioral adjustment problems, including rebellion and even violence. Disillusionment with the United States, based upon misconceptions they brought with them, and situational difficulties, such as learning English and racial prejudice, will lead to depression and, for some, suicide. 1/

1/ Jean E. Carlin, Boat and Land Refugees: "Mental Health Implications For the Recent Arrivals Compared With Earlier Arrivals." May 1980 (mimeographed).

o Insufficiency of Bilingual Education

Public schools face the job of integrating 200,000 Indochinese children who speak a variety of Asian languages and dialects. 2/ And they must accomplish this without funding or without adequate funding. Bilingual education is essential to help refugee children learn English, yet there are only a handful of school districts in California with federally funded bilingual programs. And serious gaps exist in these programs with respect to number of schools, grade levels, and languages covered by programs. California's Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act fills a little bit of the gap, if the requisite criteria are met. One educator confided that her colleagues hold their breath in the hope that they will have nine or fewer students with the same primary language in the same grade, and not be required to teach in a second language. (Ten students are required for bilingual instruction in K-6.)

o Quality of Education

Many counties have expressed concern over the quality of education received by Indochinese students. No special funds have been made available to deal with the special needs of the large influx of refugee students. 3/

2/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom. "Refugees Mean Problems for Cities - And For the Carter Administration." National Journal, February 16, 1980.

3/ Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program, Administrative Survey." Statistical Services Bureau, California Department of Social Services, March 1980.

Even for the few California school districts that have made the effort to apply for all special funding possible, there are definite problems, shortcomings, and large gaps in their programs. In one school district very well equipped to handle refugee children, an educator admitted that there were no Laotian-speaking teachers or aides and that these children would have to learn from other children.

o Family Violence

Family violence is beginning to surface, particularly among Vietnamese families. With the family adjusting to American culture, the father has lost status and face in the family and feels that he is continuing to lose control. A few cases of suicide have been reported, as well as wife battering and child abuse. Some county welfare departments are allocating their limited resources primarily for training and employment and offer little child welfare and other services.

o Religion

A few complaints have been recorded that some church sponsors are forcing their religion on refugees. Another religious issue is that few religious leaders - primarily Buddhist monks - are coming to the United States, causing many Buddhists to be without religious support or affiliation. In their countries of origin the Buddhist temple was an integral part of most refugees' lives. According to one Buddhist monk,

these religious needs are not being met by Buddhist monks or temples in the United States, because they are unfamiliar with the customs and languages of these refugees. 4/

o Legal

Clearly, the law needs to be changed, or exceptions to the law need to be permitted, to make available to eligible refugees public sector employment opportunities, military service, and enrollment in colleges and universities at resident tuition rates.

B. HUMAN SERVICES/WELFARE DEPENDENCY

o Shaping Human Services Policies and Practices to Meet Needs of Recent Refugees

In contrast with early arrivals from middle and upper socioeconomic backgrounds, recently arriving refugees represent more of a cross-section of Indochinese society. Policies and practices of presently existing human services programs need to be evaluated to determine their appropriateness for these recently arriving refugees. For example, it can be expected that these persons will require public assistance for a much longer time than earlier arrivals. One social worker predicts that average time-on-aid will be two to three years before newly arriving refugees can become self-sufficient. An emphasis on survival skills is important for this group and home management services need to be improved.

4/ Speaking informally before the National Organizations Advisory Council for Children Conference, May 7-8, 1980, in Los Angeles.

The needs of illiterate and partially literate refugees are many: orientation to American way of life, housing and transportation, English and job training, etc. What is necessary is to develop and coordinate existing human services to meet these needs.

o Welfare Dependency As a Way of Life

One county welfare official felt that many Indochinese believe that receiving welfare assistance is the American way of life. They are receiving a grant, but have nothing constructive to do to occupy their time. Pilot projects to usefully employ the time and energy of these refugee recipients would be most beneficial. In addition, the already settled Indochinese population should be encouraged to take a more active role in assisting newcomers.

o Federal Role in Creating Welfare Dependency

According to the New Transcentury Foundation report, the United States appears to be increasing federal costs and the prospects for dependency by a series of unrelated actions: providing cash assistance and medical services through the welfare network; investing relatively little money in human development; and by unwittingly supporting the practice of some agencies of referring refugees to the nearest welfare office.

The Foundation report recommends a new focus for U.S. refugee policies, one which "views refugees as only transitionally dependent populations,

who initially need concentrated services....A greater reliance needs to be placed on human investment services in order to decrease long-term reliance on maintenance programs." 5/

Marion Woods, Director of the California Department of Social Services, was reported as saying that, "Our biggest problem [with making refugees self-sufficient] is that the Federal Government still hasn't got a refugee policy and is not giving us the necessary financial support." 6/ Concerning this intimately related issue of federal financial support, last year the California Legislature passed resolutions calling for adequate federal support for refugee programs to preclude the extra financial burden from falling on the state. 7/

C. VOLAG PERFORMANCE

o Volag Role in Creating Welfare Dependency

A 1979 DHEW (now the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)) Inspector General's study was highly critical of the performance of the Volags. The report stated that Volags vary widely in philosophy, with most counseling refugees to seek work immediately but some advising them

5/ Julia Vadala Taft, David S. North, and David A. Ford. "Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time For a New Focus." Report prepared for SSA/DHEW by New Transcentury Foundation, Washington, D.C., July 31, 1979.

6/ Leo Rennert. "Brown Aide Takes on Kennedy Over Refugee Welfare Issue." The Sacramento Bee, August 30, 1979.

7/ "Refugee Settlement Problem Tackled by State Legislature." The Sacramento Bee, August 23, 1979.

to study English or obtain training while being supported by public assistance. 8/ Some evidence suggests that Volags are stressing cash assistance for the current wave of refugees, rather than encouraging the acceptance of entry-level employment. The easy availability of welfare is a strong disincentive to seeking and accepting job opportunities. Increasing reliance on cash assistance may undermine the goodwill toward refugees and may generate problems in the acceptance of future refugee groups. 9/

o Shortcomings of Volag Performance

The DHEW Secretarial Report evaluated the usefulness of current Volag resettlement efforts and found:

1. Inadequate notification and preparation for the initial arrival of refugees.
2. Most (about half) refugees move from the initial resettlement area.
3. Concerning orientation, refugees receive little information regarding their rights and responsibilities and have little understanding of American economic practices and social customs.

8/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, February 16, 1980, op. cit.

9/ Judy Sorum. "Recommended Policy for Indochinese Refugee Employment and Training." Department of Labor, December 19, 1979.

4. Volags advise refugees according to individual agency philosophy and provide inconsistent amounts of cash assistance.
5. Some Volag efforts stress survival needs - that is, providing food, housing, jobs, and clothing; therefore, refugees receive insufficient help with daily living skills, information and referral, and interpreter services.
 - a. Some Volags encourage refugee families to sponsor newcomers, although many families do not yet have the ability to help resettle a new family adequately.
 - b. When Volags in areas of heavy immigration experience "overload", the result may be lower quality service to all refugees in that area.
 - c. Forty-one percent of the service providers serving substantial numbers of refugees have no bilingual staff (also Cambodian and Laotian interpreters are rare).

The voluntary agencies that are delegated by the State Department to resettle and find jobs for refugees do not have the capacity to cope with the huge influx of people. 10/ Although most Volags try hard to

10/ William Wong. "Vietnamese Refugees Find it Hard to Adjust to New Lives in U.S." Wall Street Journal, September 20, 1976.

assist refugees, the increasing number of refugees on welfare indicates that they are not entirely successful. The U.S. Department of State does not monitor or evaluate the performance of Volags. 11/

Many refugees have negative attitudes toward Volags, stemming mainly from the varying practices and approaches of the agencies. For example, some Volags give refugees cash, while others reimburse them for actual expenses. 12/ Language barriers and cultural misunderstandings are important social obstacles and cause refugees to drop out of Volag programs before they are helped. Insufficient staff and lack of funds are important structural obstacles that impede the success of Volag programs. Administrative obstacles include confused funding directives and lack of coordination.

Agency performance could be improved by increased communication and cooperation between agencies in the same region and improved communication between agencies and clients. In order to improve communication with their clients, Volags need to (a) improve referral services,

11/ Sacramento Bee, August 25, 1979. "Magnet for Refugees...Flood of Indochinese Burdens Aid in State," by Penelope McMillan, Los Angeles Times.

12/ Jeffrey Kaye. "Yearning to Breathe Free." New West, April 7, 1980, pp. 57-70.

(b) publicize what services they offer, (c) develop more realistic programs, (d) be open on weekends and evenings, and (e) hire more Indochinese staff. 13/

o Volag-Located Sponsors: Exceptional Cases

Sponsors of refugees should be carefully screened and prepared before they assume the moral responsibility of helping refugees. The duties and responsibilities should be carefully explained and sponsors should sign an informed consent statement. This is necessary to prevent persons from acting as sponsors only for the monetary benefits. Several alarming cases have been reported of sponsors taking advantage of refugees. A composite case is given below for illustrative purposes. A sponsor picked up a family at the airport, a "stone age" family who had lived in a hut, and farmed and hunted in the hills of Laos. Although the family had never used a stove, refrigerator, or running water, and did not know how to use a bathroom, the sponsor dropped the family off at a dilapidated apartment and left them there alone with one bag of rice. The family proceeded to break up a chair, started a fire on the floor, and cooked some rice.

13/ Jacqueline S. Aames and others. "Indochinese Refugee Self-Sufficiency in California: A Survey and Analysis of the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Lao and the Agencies That Serve Them." Report submitted to the California State Department of Health, September 30, 1977.

D. FEDERAL MANAGEMENT, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

o Inadequate Federal Management

President Carter doubled the number of Indochinese refugees entering the United States from 7,000 to 14,000 per month without sufficient planning or follow-up. Seattle Mayor Charles Royer warned that the refugee problem could escalate into "a series of major racial incidents". He also added that the President has made one of the largest refugee commitments since World War II; and it does not reflect well on the President "if he doesn't manage it right and people get hurt (pp. 223-224)." 14/

o The Absence of Federal Policies Regarding Assimilation

Speaking before the U.S. Conference of Mayors, on January 24, 1980, Ambassador Victor H. Palmieri, who recently had been appointed to manage both domestic and international refugee matters (reporting directly to the White House), admitted that the Federal Government does not have any policies or programs directed at integrating refugees. In Ambassador Palmieri's words, "We have an elaborate management system abroad now to deal with resettlement, but we haven't given any attention to the question of how to fit [the refugees] into our society (p. 273)." 15/

14/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, National Journal, February 15, 1980, op. cit.

15/ Ibid.

o New Federal Policy Needed Concerning Employment and Training

Since a sizeable minority of refugees resettling in the United States is still receiving cash assistance, expanded employment and training services for refugees are urgently needed. Since the country has entered a recession, and the economy's capacity to absorb new workers is strained, newly arriving refugees will be even less successful in finding employment. The need exists for an active labor market strategy for refugees, particularly refugee youth. According to one Department of Labor official, federal programs and services should be made more effective in matching refugees' skills to employment needs, rather than in creating special, visible refugee programs. 16/ Refugees also believe that the Federal Government has been slow in assisting them to find employment. 17/

o Shortcomings of DHEW Programs

The DHEW Secretarial Report evaluated the usefulness of DHEW programs and found:

1. Significant differences in the scope of services among states. (These inequities have adverse consequences for refugees - for example, they limit opportunities for English and job training essential for long-term self-sufficiency.)

16/ Judy Sorum. December 19, 1979, op. cit.

17/ William Wong, Wall Street Journal, September 20, 1976, op. cit.

2. Not enough English language programs exist. When available, many are haphazard; the good programs have long waiting lists and huge classes.
3. Job counseling and vocational/skills training are scarce.
 - a. Eligibility criteria and English requirements often exclude refugees from mainstream skill training programs.
 - b. Refugees are largely limited to the secondary job market, which does not provide health insurance, job security, or any benefits.
4. Physical and dental health screening and treatment is sporadic.
 - a. Public health facilities are overwhelmed in some areas.
 - b. Delays occur in obtaining Medicaid cards; however, some physicians will not accept them.
 - c. Interpreters may not be able to understand and explain Western medical practices.
5. Many refugees are experiencing emotional problems, for which Western methods of treatment are not believed to be effective.

6. Welfare policies vary among states and dramatically affect the choices available to refugee families.

a. Two-thirds of the respondents reported being on welfare at some time.

b. Seventy-four percent reported having no problems with welfare. Those reporting problems mentioned long delays in eligibility determination (three months), late payments, lack of interpreters, complex reporting requirements and difficulty in filling out forms.

7. Housing is a major problem for these reasons: It is difficult to find and very costly in some areas; in other areas, housing is available but is located in unsafe neighborhoods; even when refugees have adequate housing, many are overcrowded.

8. The shortcomings indicated above contribute to secondary migration to areas with better programs, thus increasing overcrowded conditions in these areas of heavy concentrations of refugees.

o Federal Reorganization of Program Administration

The mayors' conference takes the position that DHEW is better equipped than the State Department to run the domestic refugee program because DHEW has established relationships with cities. The National Association of Counties are neutral on this point. However, one

official of the Volags felt that "reorganization of the system at a time when refugees are streaming into the country could only make matters worse (p. 275)." 18/

There was some sentiment on California's Refugee Task Force that the administration of the program should not rest with the State Department but should be given instead to DHEW. 19/

o Urgent Needs of Cities

The U.S. Conference of Mayors, meeting in Washington on January 24, 1980, demanded the following federal assistance: 20/

1. An adequate early-warning information and tracking system for refugees;
2. Immediate and long-term federal housing;
3. Adequate medical treatment before refugees enter the United States; and
4. Translators in sufficient number, and full reimbursement to local governments for their costs.

18/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, February 16, 1980, op. cit.

19/ Jeffrey Kaye, New West, April 7, 1980, op. cit.

20/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, February 15, 1980, op. cit.



CHAPTER 2. REFUGEE CHILDREN'S ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION

ENVIRONMENT IN NATIVE COUNTRY

Before presenting cross-cultural differences and the resultant problems experienced by Indochinese children and youth, it is important to gain some familiarity with their environments in their countries of origin. Having this "benchmark" information will facilitate and highlight cultural differences and expectations. Three areas will be described to illustrate differences between the Indochinese and American cultures: family and social relationships, education, and food and eating patterns.

Family and Social Relationships

The family is the basic unit in Indochinese societies and constitutes the individual's primary reference group throughout the life of its members. An individual's first loyalty is to his family--family loyalty and obligation come before one's nation, religion, or oneself.

In Vietnam, 1/ the family is a superorganic unit existing across generations past and future--it is not a nuclear family. Thus, the family is viewed as a lineage with continuity through time. An individual is expected to defer to the goals of the family and to the head of the family. The Vietnamese family is a patriarchy with the senior working male generally acting as family head; upon his retirement, leadership is passed to the oldest son.

Vietnamese children are prized and valued both as children and as carriers of the family lineage. Children are cared for primarily by the mother for the first two years, after which time the grandmother and others take on much of the responsibility. During their first six years, children are reared permissively, except in areas of traditional behavior, family values, and personal conduct. Respect for elders is ingrained during this period.

Fathers assume the primary disciplinary responsibility, with mothers assuming a secondary role. The permissiveness of early childhood ends at about the age of six, and the child is subject to strict discipline. From the age of six through

1/ Cultural Awareness Training Manual. "Indochinese Health Care". A Conference for Health Professionals. San Diego, California, November 22, 1979.

12, the Vietnamese child is socialized in the details of appropriate behavior. At the age of 12 the standards for behavior change with increasing expectations regarding obedience, modesty and chastity for girls; boys are increasingly expected to exemplify male adult behavior.

A high school education is traditionally viewed as adequate for girls, and the majority terminate their education at this point. Although some women attend college and go on to professional careers, getting married and having children are still the major criteria by which women's personal achievements are evaluated. For young men, personal autonomy comes with economic self-sufficiency and contributing to the family welfare. Education is highly valued and encouraged.

The typical family consists of grandparents, their oldest (or youngest) son and his wife, their other unmarried children, and the grandchildren by the eldest son and his wife. Family harmony is an important goal; therefore, conflict, embarrassment, and insensitivity are avoided. Harmonious relationships are maintained through deferential and respectful role-appropriate behavior within the family structure.

Cambodian 2/ families are large extended families and consist of parents and children, grandparents, cousins, and sometimes uncles and aunts. The father is the breadwinner and is accorded the position of highest status in the family. The mother's role consists of child care and education, cooking and housekeeping. Family decisions are made by the father.

2/ Pok Than. "Educational Needs and Backgrounds of Cambodian Refugees: Cambodian Educational System". California State Department of Education, June 1978.

Parents provide education for their children, and the parents assume responsibility for their children usually until marriage. Marriage is arranged by the parents. In the absence of parents, the oldest member of the family has to take care of the younger members, for which the latter owe respect and obedience.

Friendship is very important. People share everything, and they do not hesitate to visit without prior arrangements. People are reluctant to call new acquaintances by name, using relationship titles of address instead. Also, they are not generous in praising. People of different sex do not touch or embrace each other unless they are very close.

Laotian 3/ family bonds and the sense of family are very strong. Members of three, four, and sometimes five generations live in the same household. Old persons are taken care of by their children or by members of the community; nursing homes do not exist. The husband is the highest status family member; the wife has a subordinate, but important, role in the family. Women must obey their parents when they are young and unmarried and their husbands when they are married.

Children are expected to obey and respect their parents and do not have much freedom. Although there has been some recent change, young children are strictly disciplined according to traditional moral standards. Children usually stay with their parents until they get married; they may stay with their parents after marriage if the children are not self-sufficient or if their presence is needed. Young adults rarely date and courtship is very formal and traditional, with the couple usually in the company of many family members and friends.

3/ Kao Outsama. "Laotian Themes." Center for Bilingual Education, Board of Education of the City of New York, June 1977.

Education

In Vietnam, 4/ the teacher is highly respected and has complete authority in the classroom. The teacher initiates all activity, and the students react in a passive manner. The Vietnamese language reinforces the formal relationships between teachers and students. Most of the schools are college preparatory, and only the academically able continue up the educational ladder. This leads to a competitiveness among students and a fear of examinations. Good orientation to the American system of grading and examinations is essential.

Parent-Teacher Associations do not exist in Vietnam. Relatively inactive Parent Associations do exist. Teachers have no office hours and no interaction with parents. Parents occasionally had some association with school administrators. Thus, the purpose of meetings between parents and American teachers need to be thoroughly explained.

Coeducation exists in Vietnam, but boys and girls are usually separated in classes, if not in schools. In mixed classes, girls are seated in the front, boys in the back. Boy-girl relationships exist on a reserved level and under surveillance. Going out in groups is permissible, but casual dating is not very common. College students have more freedom than high school students.

4/ Phuoc huu Nguyen. "Possible Problems for Vietnamese Students in American Schools". Mimeographed (date unknown).

The Cambodian 5/ classroom environment is characterized by these features: the classroom is usually square or rectangular and very austere; the visual teaching materials are a blackboard and chalk; tables are arranged in two rows with a space between for the teacher; classes are very crowded, 40 to 50 students; girls and boys are mixed in the same class but do not sit at the same table; relations between boys and girls are characterized by reserve and shyness; and students owe respect and obedience to the teacher.

Cambodian school systems have these features: highly centralized, national curriculum for the whole country; curriculum emphasizes academic study; grades are given in points (0 to 20); the school year is nine months and is broken evenly into three semesters; one examination (essay or recitation) is given each semester; homework is given but counts little toward final grade; four national examinations are given from the first grade to the end of high school; modern math is not taught; students return home to each lunch; and recreation receives little supervision.

The Laotian 6/ classroom environment is characterized by these features: each classroom has one teacher who teaches all subjects; the students stay in the same room for all subjects; teachers lecture during a lesson; students show respect to their teacher by rising to greet them; students listen attentively to the lecture and are often too shy to ask questions; classes are generally very large (up to 50 in public schools and more in private schools); textbooks are

5/ Pok Than, June 1978, op. cit.

6/ Kao Outsama, June 1977; op. cit.

rare; coeducation is acceptable, but in rural areas the sexes are generally separated; sex education does not exist; and teachers have considerable authority to take disciplinary action.

The educational system in Laos has these features. Public education is funded completely by the government, with the Laotian Ministry of Education controlling the system for the whole country; education is geared toward theoretical and academic training; school is held six days per week, from 30 to 36 hours; exams are given in every subject three times a year; an important exam is given at the end of each year that must be passed on a scale of from 0 to 20 points; parents have very little contact with the school system.

Food and Eating Patterns

The basic food in Vietnam ^{7/} is rice. The rice is supplemented by noodle soup, greens, and small amounts of meat, poultry and fish. Chopsticks are used at the two, possibly three, meals which are eaten each day. Many fruits are eaten such as bananas, mangos, papayas, oranges, coconuts, and pineapple. Fresh milk is usually not used much after age three years (as many Asians and others lack lactase, the enzyme which digests lactose in milk), and tea and coffee are the common drinks.

Babies are generally breastfed much longer than is the custom for American babies. Babies and toddlers are also fed soft-cooked rice and rice-soup with small amounts of cooked meat or fish. School-age children generally adjust quickly to American foods.

^{7/} "Tips on the Care and Adjustment of Vietnamese and Other Asian Children in the United States." Children's Bureau, Office of Human Development, U.S. DHEW, 1975.

Cambodians 8/ eat a lot of rice with some meat, poultry and fish; few vegetables are eaten. Generally, taste is more important than quality in the selection of food. People sit on the floor to eat and use spoons and forks or chopsticks. They eat quickly, with little conversation during the meal. The food is served on a common plate or bowl, and they share with each other. Persons in the country have two meals per day, while those in the city have three.

For Laotians, 9/ cooking is an art, and a great deal of time and effort is spent in the preparation of food. Fresh food is obtained daily, since people do not have refrigerators. Laotians have two equally large meals a day and the third, breakfast, is very small. Meals are eaten with spoons, chopsticks, and hands. People sit on the floor around a tray and select their food from the tray. Rice is the main starch, and small pieces of meat or fish are eaten. Food is usually served first to older persons as a sign of respect. Women usually eat less than men and do not take alcoholic drinks. The family dinner is a symbol of loyalty, friendship, and affection; hospitality is always extended to others.

THE LITERATURE:

PROBLEMS AND THEIR EFFECTS

A quotation from Dr. Jean E. Carlin effectively sets the stage for this section:

"Refugee children from Southeast Asia are different from other children.... The differences lie in their cultural backgrounds, their languages, and their reasons for being refugees (whether they are orphans, unaccompanied

8/ Pok Than, June 1978, op. cit.

9/ Kao Outsama, June 1977.

children under the age of sixteen, or children of refugee families). They may have come from Vietnam, Cambodia (Khmer Republic), or Laos. They are different also because in fleeing their war-torn country, they escaped the same war which divided the people in the country to which they have come. Most such refugee children left their homes with little or no planning or preparation. The departures took place amid fires, shooting, sirens, and mortar shells. People were screaming, running, pushing, and shoving; all trying to get out. Many arrived in the United States possessing only the clothes on their backs; all else was lost (p. 290)." 10/

Early Versus Later Arriving Refugee Children

Refugees arriving in this country in 1975 had somewhat different problems from those arriving later, as is illustrated in another document by Dr. Carlin. In this latter report, Dr. Carlin specified differences between early and later arrivals, by ethnic group, for adolescents and children, as summarized below.

In comparison to earlier arrivals (1975-76), later Vietnamese adolescents had a slower transition to Western culture - spent four to 13 months in camp; fewer unaccompanied minors have been accepted; were less physically healthy; were somewhat behind in school because of their stays in camp; but on the positive side, came into a school situation prepared to assist them to some extent. Both early and later arrivals experienced bad dreams and grief over loss of Vietnam, and some are rebellious. Similarly, the Vietnamese children who came later had

10/ Jean E. Carlin. "The Catastrophically Uprooted Child: Southeast Asian Refugee Children." Chapter 28 in Justin D. Call, Joseph D. Noshpitz, Richard L. Cohen and Irving N. Berlin (Eds.) Basic Handbook of Child Psychiatry. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1979.

a slower transition to Western culture, were less physically healthy, and were behind in school from long waits in camp. Some children arriving both early and later who are with their own parents have become less respectful of their parents than they were in Vietnam.

In contrast to early arrivals, later Cambodian adolescents had a slower transition to American culture. Adolescence is a time of normal identity crisis, and long waits in refugee camps during this period compounded their problems in America. The early arrivals rarely saw their parents who were so busy earning a living; the later arriving parents had more difficulty and were without goals and hope. This helped to make their adolescent children confused, apathetic, and distrustful. The early arrivals heard about the atrocities in Cambodia, while their later arriving counterparts experienced them. Thus, this latter group of adolescents experienced severe malnutrition, anemia, and other illnesses plus severe psychological traumas and were unable to engage in normal adolescent activities (sports, education and marriage). Thus, many children show severe growth delay due to profound protein and calorie malnutrition and illnesses.

Similarly, later arriving Cambodian children had a slower transition to Western culture, and they were up to five years behind in school because of no schools in Cambodia and long stays in camp, and they were susceptible to many possible physical and psychological problems because of the effects of severe malnutrition (which for infants could result in retardation, also later obsession with food). Some may become violent because of their early exposure to multiple dangers and atrocities during their precarious escapes. The differences between early and later arriving Laotian adolescents and children were probably the same as for the Cambodian youths, with one exception: The later arriving Lao Hmong experienced severe racial tensions with the Lao and other Asians.

There were very few, if any, adolescent Lao Hmong (and other hill people) in 1975. The later arrivals had the longest camp stays (up to five years) and a long transition to Western culture. Since the Lao Hmong were unknown to United States culture, the adolescents have trouble establishing their identity in this country. They also experienced these problems: freedom and independence at school and with peer group versus obedience and respect for authority at home. It was bewildering for these youths, without academic experience, to be placed in school according to their chronological ages. They had trouble asserting themselves in school; they could not receive academic help from their illiterate parents.

Very few Lao Hmong children came in 1975. The later arrivals had many of the same problems as the adolescents and, in addition, experienced many cultural misunderstandings between their parents and leaders (generation gap), had no role models for American culture, and were subject to the probable adverse physical and psychological consequences of long camp stays at very young ages. 11/

Age and Age Calculation

For all refugee children/youth, the age at which a child enters the United States is extremely significant. Very young infants under six months of age had little or no memory of their experiences in their homeland, their precarious departures, and their usually difficult journeys to the United States. However, even for these infants escapes without food and clothing predisposed them to malnutrition, weight loss, and multiple illnesses. Older infants between six months and two years of age will have some preverbal memories which may cause

11/ Jean E. Carlin. May 1980, op. cit.

problems. Because of the terrors experienced by the infants, some may have nightmarish dreams in the years to come. Importantly, a sufficiently traumatic event generally occurring by age 12 to 15 months can significantly disrupt or even stop the acquisition of language.

The refugee child between two and nine years have many memories of their languages, foods, culture, and customs. They remember the war and were taught to hate and fear the Viet Cong. These children may have intricate adjustment problems. Children who also may have problems are those entering the United States between the ages of nine and 15 or 18 years. They face the usual identity problems of adolescence but, in addition, they must work through an identity conflict about being Asians in America.

Age calculation is another important factor cultural difference with the potential for causing difficulty. For most Indochinese children, age is calculated roughly from conception; thus, they are considered one year of age at birth. An additional year is gained at every New Year or Tet. A child born just before New Year's Day could be considered to be two years old at birth. In addition, parents often changed their children's birth certificates in order to keep them out of the army longer. This "method" of calculating age is important in determining school placement and for athletic competition and social situations.

The English Language

Learning English is not an easy task for the Indochinese child. English is written with Latin letters while Cambodian, Thai, and Laotian are script languages; thus, learning English requires learning a new alphabet as well. The

Vietnamese student does not have this problem since Vietnamese is written with Latin letters. Vietnamese and other Indochinese knowing French (which uses Latin letters also) would have an easier time learning English. 12/

However, there are some significant differences between Vietnamese and English, some of which are described below. Vietnamese is a consistently tonal language. This makes the English system of long and short vowel sounds particularly confusing. Further difficulty arises when the student is faced with English inconsistencies and exceptions. Although Vietnamese and English have essentially the same alphabet, many Vietnamese letters are pronounced somewhat differently from their English counterparts, and several English sounds have no equivalent in Vietnamese. English final consonants and consonant clusters are an additional source of confusion and difficulty. Differences in intonation between the two languages further complicate pronunciation problems. The fundamental difference between Vietnamese and English grammar is that Vietnamese expresses grammatical function through syntax while English makes morphological distinctions. The Vietnamese language is not as difficult as the more elaborate English system. 13/

An actual illustration makes the difficulty of learning English and resultant problems come alive. Speaking to a doctor at the University of California, Irvine, Child Psychiatry Unit, Loc, a nine-year-old Vietnamese refugee child said:

12/ Jean E. Carlin. "The Catastrophically Uprooted Child", 1979, op. cit.

13/ Lynell Burmark and Hyung-Chankim. "The Challenge of Educating Vietnamese Children in American Schools." Integrated Education, Vol. 16, No. 1, January-February 1978, pp. 2-8.

"Doctor, when I first came to the hospital, I was upset." "Yes, you were very upset. Do you remember why?" Loc said, "Yes, I couldn't speak English, the other children thought I didn't know anything (p. 299)." 14/

Mental Health

A nationwide study summarized the mental health needs of children and youth from birth to 18 years. 15/ Indochinese refugees in the 13 to 18 age group experience intergenerational conflicts and school adjustment problems most frequently. Children falling into the seven to 12 age group were facing school adjustment problems: improper placement was causing emotional difficulties, and peer pressure to "Americanize" quickly was causing family conflicts between parents and these children. The age group zero to six was experiencing problems of health care (including malnutrition) and neglect caused by the need of both parents to work and the lack of day care facilities. Another problem of this group was a loss of ethnic identity.

Unaccompanied Minors

One group deserves special consideration: unaccompanied minors. In providing testimony in hearings before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law of the Committee on the Judiciary, Henry K. Wohlgenuth,

14/ Jean E. Carlin. "The Catastrophically Uprooted Child", 1979, op. cit.

15/ Bureau of Research and Training, "National Mental Health Needs Assessment of Indochinese Refugee Populations", op. cit.

Director of the Indochinese Program of the Lutheran Children and Family Service in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, enumerated special problems of unaccompanied minors, some of which follow. 16/

- o Serious misunderstandings between agency and foster parents and youth occur due to the initial inability of the youth to communicate in English.
- o Loss of face and inability to understand forgiveness over a misdeed causes serious problems.
- o Youth, in a few cases, come with an expectation that they are to be cared for by "the government" and see the foster parent and agency as a unit of government. Thus, they are perceived as being "spoiled", demanding, and unappreciative.
- o The youth, again in a few cases, can perceive the foster parent, who receives funds to offset living expenses, as being "in business" to "serve" his needs and one who really is motivated by money, not affection.
- o Examples of cultural differences causing problems: the role of women in the American home, the method of child discipline, the role and order of children in the family.

In contrast to the adaptability of Vietnamese children who were here with their own families, the unaccompanied children were found to be profoundly vulnerable and at high risk of psychiatric problems. When appropriate and possible, these children should be returned to their legal parents if the parents escape and

relocate in the United States or another safe country. However, removing children from foster families and communities where they have been for several years would be traumatic.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Van, a 12 or 13-year-old Vietnamese unaccompanied minor. It should be noted that these sentiments are probably not typical of all unaccompanied children.

"I overcame hardship and arrived in California. I am very tired of life and wanted to die. Who will build for me a grave after I die? Who will bury my body? Who will say 'I love you'? I need not live because life is not beautiful (p. 295)." 17/

Crime

Given all the difficulties of these children and youth, one might expect some "acting out" behavior and trouble with the law. The California Department of the Youth Authority (CYA) does not maintain separate statistics for Indochinese, but includes them among all Asians. Looking at the numbers and rate of Asian first commitments to the CYA (Asians as a percentage of total first admissions) over a period of time (before and after the sudden influx of Indochinese in 1975), it is clear that no increase in rate is evident. Although these youth have had serious adjustment problems, and some brushes with the law, they are not yet showing up in California's official statistics. 18/

17/ Jean E. Carlin. "The Catastrophically Uprooted Child", 1979, op. cit.

18/ Department of Youth Authority, "Annual Report(s), Program Description and Statistical Summary", State of California.

TABLE 2.1

ASIAN FIRST COMMITMENTS TO THE CALIFORNIA
YOUTH AUTHORITY, SELECTED YEARS 1973-1979:
RATE (AND NUMBER)

	1973 (15)	1974 (29)	1976 (25)	1978 (22)	1979 (20)
Total	0.5	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.6
Juvenile Court	0.5	1.2	0.7	1.0	0.5
Criminal Court	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.6

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN AMERICA

There have been a number of cultural and educational differences resulting in possible or actual problems for Vietnamese students:

1. Naming system. One of 12 family names is used by 85 percent of the Vietnamese population. One family name - Nguyen - is used by 40 to 50 percent. The order of Vietnamese names is the exact opposite of the American system: The family name is given first and is followed by the middle name and, lastly, the first (or personal) name. To complicate the matter further, some refugees adapt their names to the American order but others do not. Indochinese names usually have meanings, and mispronunciation of the name changes the meaning - often resulting in much embarrassment.

2. Shyness and smiling. Most students are very shy, especially girls. Sometimes laughter or giggling is used to cover embarrassment. At times, smiling and laughter may seem inappropriate to Westerners. 19/
3. Parental pressure. Compared to an American child, the Vietnamese child is under more intense pressure to study. Products of a culture which places a high value on learning, Vietnamese parents have forced children to study and to do well in school. Parents may not include extracurricular activities, such as athletics, in their definition of "learning".
4. Minimized play cycle. The Vietnamese child apparently has less time for play than his American counterpart. Play is not perceived as being a necessary counterpart of work, as it is by Americans, and play is given as a reward for good work.
5. Respect for age. In contrast to American children, Vietnamese children have more contact and are more familiar with people of old age. The child's behavior toward all his elders is usually one of respect and obedience - these attitudes and behaviors are inculcated early in the child's life. An American would view the child's manners as being formal and polite.

19/ These first two items are from Phuoc huu Nguyen, "Possible Problems for Vietnamese Students in American Schools." Mimeographed (date unknown).

6. Caught between two forces. The Vietnamese child has to adjust to expected forms of behavior at school and to different expectations at home; he has to show quite a good deal of adaptability as he changes cultures. This ability to "switch" between cultures as the situation requires is the essence of cross-cultural adjustment; and upon this ability depends much of the child's success in being accepted by both forces. Many children are not that successful at acquiring this ability, which has caused conflict between parents and children.
7. The passive learning style. Problems between Vietnamese children and their American teachers have been caused by the "passive" approach to learning which has deep roots in Vietnamese culture. Rather than the "active", dynamic approach to learning that American children are encouraged to adopt, the Vietnamese child prefers to learn by listening, watching, and imitating others.
8. Reluctance to ask questions. Students are familiar with the formal, serious atmosphere in the Vietnamese classroom, and with paying respect to teachers who are strict disciplinarians and rather authoritarian. Therefore, the children's self-expression is practiced under tight control and appears inhibited. After time has elapsed, children are less reluctant to participate in class discussion, but the majority of refugee children are still far from outgoing.
9. Agility, manual dexterity and a genius at improvisations. An Indochinese child is usually of slighter build than his American counterpart; combined with quick reflex, this slight build makes him excel in games where agility, not muscular strength, is required. Thus, he usually prefers

ping-pong and soccer, but not rougher games. His manual dexterity and handwriting have been praised by American teachers. Since toys in Vietnam were scarce, the child prefers simple toys and prefers to make them. 20/

Cultural Conflict Cases. 21/ The following cases illustrate actual cultural conflicts of Vietnamese students in American public schools:

Case 1.

A Vietnamese girl in the 10th grade in Missouri reportedly refused to go to her gym class. Only much later did the real reason come out as she revealed it to a Vietnam friend. She objected to being seen bare-legged, wearing gym shorts. Coming from a region of Vietnam where old customs and traditions were still strong, and where women, young and old, were never to be seen bare-legged, she confessed to an intense feeling of discomfort when the gym hour came around.

Case 2.

An eight-year-old Vietnamese child in an elementary school in Maryland complained of a stomachache every day shortly after his lunch hour. His teacher was mystified by the fact that the same food and milk did not make any other child in the class sick. The cause was later identified to be the fresh milk which was perfectly good, but to which the boy's digestive system was not accustomed (since many Asians and others lack the enzyme to digest milk).

20/ Items 3 through 9 are from "A Manual for Indochinese Refugee Education, 1976-1977." U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Social and Rehabilitation Service, (SRS) 77-21237.

21/ Ibid.

Case 3.

A Cambodian girl of 14 at a school in Virginia was fond of wearing to school a little gold pendant that looked like a swastika on a fine gold chain around her neck. The whole class was intrigued by the unusual object she chose for a pendant. One day a boy, unable to contain his curiosity any longer, said to her: "Hey, are you a member of the American Nazi Party, or something?" She felt embarrassed and wanted to take the pendant off, but her mother insisted that she continue to wear it. The students in the class never found out that the little pendant was actually a Buddhist religious symbol often worn by Cambodian and Vietnamese women as a token of blessing or good luck.

Case 4.

In a science class at a high school in the Midwest, a Vietnamese girl was paired with an American boy for lab work. The pair did not work well together and the girl, clearly needing help from her partner, never asked for help. She seemed to prefer a poor grade to receiving help from the boy. Noticing the uneasiness between the two, the teacher split the pair. He found out later that the Vietnamese girl had rarely associated with boys before and had felt intense embarrassment at having to work closely with a boy for the first time.

Even though there was co-education in Vietnam, boys and girls usually did not communicate or interact as frequently and as casually as in the U.S. And although a mixed group did go out to have fun together, no definite pairing was involved. Single dating as it is practiced in the U.S. is rare, and where it is adopted by a boy and a girl, it usually means that they have reached the stage which, in the U.S., would be called "going steady".

Case 5.

A Laotian boy was a top-notch scholar in his 12th grade class at home. He was an honor student and was at the top of his class in all the subjects. Last fall, repeating 12th grade as a refugee teenager in a high school in Washington, D.C., he received three successive warning notices for poor work in biology due to his inability to speak the English language. It was quite a blow to his pride and his self-esteem. The biology teacher graded his paper just like any other paper, without any consideration for his serious language handicap. The language problem still plagues the refugees, and for many students, it has also caused a cultural problem: the loss of face.

Adjustment. Despite all the problems, Indochinese students are adjusting well. Educators report that Vietnamese students who spoke no English three years ago have caught up with their class and frequently excel, particularly in math. The following reasons for success are given: hard work, discipline, and infrequent participation in extracurricular activities. This success that refugee children are experiencing at school is causing problems at home. The children are

adapting to American culture faster than their parents. The children know English better than their parents, and the parents, particularly the father, feel that they are losing control over the children. 22/

A report of the adjustment of Laotian and Hmong children in a preschool in San Diego is optimistic. Within three to five months, the children had changed from a crying, withdrawn state to one of complete activity; were learning English rapidly; ate most foods that were presented to them; participated in group activities; kept their shoes on and were beginning to part with their clothes (the fear that the clothes would not be returned was diminishing) and have even had some social interaction with American children. The assimilation of these children was called "phenomenal". 23/

ORIGINAL SURVEY DATA

Rationale

This project was originally initiated to gather information on the problems of Indochinese children resulting from cross-cultural differences. The literature, reviewed above, has serious shortcomings:

- o Scope - tends to be narrow, with a focus on one area - mental health, for example.

22/ Tracy Wood. "Vietnamese Now Fighting Just to Cope." Los Angeles Times, April 29, 1978.

23/ Terri Lee Kubow. "Children of Laos: A Descriptive Report." Linda Vista Christian Day Care Center, San Diego, California, Spring 1977.

- o Coverage - education and mental health tend to be the major areas covered, to the partial or total exclusion of other relevant areas such as public welfare.
- o Categorization of Conflicts/Problems - it is difficult to get a sense of how important these are or how they relate to each other.
- o Recency - the available information covers many points-in-time and, generally, is not very recent.
- o Locale - California is not always emphasized.

In order to attempt to remedy these shortcomings, a survey was conducted to permit the collection of additional data.

Method

A purposive (not random) sample was developed of administrators and professionals providing services to refugee children and their families in California. Specifically, survey respondents included child day care providers, mental health service providers, employment and training project staff, IRAP coordinators, state program and administrative staff, teachers, and school district administrators. Two brief (two-page) survey instruments were developed to be used for data collection. The first was a general questionnaire concerning cultural problems in assimilation, while the second focused on education. Due to time restrictions, the instruments were not field tested, but most items proved to be useful - that is, provided meaningful data. (Both questionnaires may be found in the Appendix.)

All data were collected during May 1980 by personal interview or by telephone. A total of 49 interviews were completed, 31 in person and 18 by telephone. Of the 49, 20 were knowledgeable about education and responded to the education questionnaire. Personal interviews were conducted in the six counties with the heaviest concentration of Indochinese refugee students: Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Francisco.

Of the 49 respondents responding to both questionnaires, 16 were Indochinese (33 percent) and 33 were non-Indochinese (67 percent). Of the 20 responding to the education questionnaire, seven were Indochinese (35 percent) and 11 (65 percent) were non-Indochinese. Practically all the Indochinese respondents were refugees; thus, Indochinese refugees were well represented in the sample. These numbers are not large enough to provide definite/error-free data; however, they are large enough to be strongly indicative.

Findings: General Cross-Cultural Differences/Cultural Conflicts

Respondents were shown or read (depending on the type of interview) a list of areas of possible/probable conflict and were asked to select the three most critical areas, in order of priority, causing the most problems for the typical refugee child. (The list was synthesized from the review of the literature.) These data are given in Table 2.2. 24/

24/ Totals on this table and all other tables in this section do not include nonresponses.

TABLE 2.2

MOST CRITICAL AREAS OF POSSIBLE
CULTURAL CONFLICT FOR INDOCHINESE CHILDREN

Critical Areas	Order of Importance							
	First		Second		Third		Total Responses	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
TOTAL	40	100	32	100	33	100	118	100
Language difference	27	70	4	13	3	9	34	30
Differences in learning and education	1	2	12	39	5	15	18	15
Different rates of assimilation between parents and children	8	20	2	6	2	6	12	10
Social relationships	1	2	2	6	9	28	12	10
Behavioral differences	1	2	3	9	6	18	10	8
Other family conflicts	1	2	3	9	2	6	6	5
Names	0	-	2	6	4	12	6	5
Physical appearance	1	2	2	6	1	3	4	3
Food	0	-	2	6	1	3	3	3
Other	0	-	0	-	0	-	13	11

Major Findings:

- o The most critical area of possible cultural conflict was language differences, with 70 percent of the respondents selecting this as their first choice. A slightly higher percentage of Indochinese respondents (75 percent) than non-Indochinese respondents (69 percent) selected this area as being their first choice.
- o Another 20 percent selected different rates of assimilation between parents and children as being the most critical area. Again, a slightly higher percentage of Indochinese respondents (25 percent) than non-Indochinese respondents (19 percent) selected this area as being of highest importance.
- o Differences in learning and education were judged to be of second most importance by 39 percent of the respondents. The difference between the respondent groups was substantial. Forty-five percent of the Indochinese respondents felt that this area was of secondary importance, compared with 33 percent of the non-Indochinese respondents.
- o Differences in social relationships between Indochinese and others was the most popular area selected for third choice - 28 percent felt that this was the area of third most importance. The difference between Indochinese (27 percent) and non-Indochinese respondents (29 percent) was small.

- o When assessing aggregate responses, it is interesting to note that the four critical areas discussed above account for approximately two-thirds of the responses.

Respondents were then asked if they could recommend some possible resolutions for the three areas of cultural conflict that they had selected. The most frequently given recommendations for the areas deemed most critical are given below.

A. Language differences:

1. Additional ESL classes in schools or training sites.
2. Employ more bilingual staff for schools.
3. Employ staff of same background as children, or staff experienced in working with children.

B. Differences in learning and education:

1. Create special classes to help children adjust to our school system.
2. Employ more bilingual counselors and teachers aides.

C. Different rates of assimilation between parents and children:

1. More ESL and special training classes for adults are needed.
2. Bilingual counseling and orientation to the American culture is needed in the home.
3. More Indochinese cultural centers and self-help community projects are needed for parents and children.
4. Schools should translate all documents that go home into the parents' native language.
5. Enlist parental participation in schools by developing outreach and orientation programs employing bilingual, bicultural staff.

D. Social relationships:

1. Professional staff working with Indochinese children and their parents must respect and understand cross-cultural differences.
2. Establish preschool centers of mixed race to facilitate adjustment at an early age.
3. Institute bilingual classes on social relations in schools and in the community.

E. Behavioral differences:

1. Create audiovisual presentations to help teachers and others understand behavioral differences.
2. Orient children to American customs and social traditions.

In the last of this series of interrelated questionnaire items, respondents were asked to specify which Indochinese group they were thinking of in naming the three areas of probable cultural conflict. In general, respondents were thinking of all children - that is, no particular group and, less frequently, Vietnamese. The group most frequently thought of, for each of the major areas of probable cultural conflict, follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| o Language difference | All children/no specific group |
| o Differences in learning and education | All children/no specific group |
| o Different rates of assimilation between parents and children | Vietnamese |
| o Social relationships | All children/no specific group and Vietnamese (same frequency) |
| o Behavioral differences | All children/no specific group |

Respondents were then asked if there were any other critical problems that they would like to convey. For those answering in the affirmative, quite an array of problems resulted, as is illustrated by the following partial list. It should be noted that the first problem was mentioned six times; the second, three times; the third, two times; and all others, once each.

- o Better guidelines are needed for welfare, health, and mental health.
- o Better coordination is needed between services offered by federal, state, and local agencies.
- o The oldest children are having the most difficulty integrating.
- o Insufficient jobs for teenagers.
- o Clarification of legal status so jobs can be more easily obtained.
- o Insufficient foster homes for older children.
- o Housing, transportation, and financial security are needed.
- o Grandparents' status becomes much lower in the United States.
- o Family violence.
- o Children are exposed to the drug "scene".

- o Conflicts between Indochinese and non-Indochinese children.
- o Some sponsors are abusing families or are not orienting families sufficiently.
- o Some church sponsors are forcing their religion on refugees.

As a summary question for the first questionnaire, respondents were given a continuum, from extremely good to extremely poor, and were asked to categorize the typical refugee child's assimilation into American culture. The resulting data are presented in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3
DEGREE OF CHILDREN'S ASSIMILATION INTO
AMERICAN CULTURE

Assimilation	Indochinese Respondents		Non-Indochinese Respondents		Total Respondents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
TOTAL	11	100	24	100	35	100
Extremely Good	2	18	1	4	3	9
Good	6	55	13	54	19	54
Fair	3	27	9	38	12	34
Poor	0	-	1	4	1	3
Extremely Poor	0	-	0	-	0	-

The majority - 54 percent - felt that the typical child's assimilation was good, and an additional nine percent thought it was extremely good. Another third felt the assimilation was fair, and only three percent (one person) thought it was poor. Clearly, respondents felt that the children's assimilation was quite good. This finding holds even when respondents are divided into Indochinese and non-Indochinese groups, although the opinions of the Indochinese respondents were more positive. Seventy-three percent of the Indochinese respondents categorized the typical child's assimilation as good or extremely good, compared to 58 percent of the non-Indochinese counterparts.

Respondents were then asked if they could make the same categorization of assimilation for the most prominent Indochinese subgroups. Table 2.4, which follows, presents these data. Since the numbers in the table from which the percentages were computed are generally small, it is best to combine categories when analyzing the information, as appropriate.

TABLE 2.4

DEGREE OF CHILDREN'S ASSIMILATION INTO AMERICAN
CULTURE FOR THE MAJOR REFUGEE ETHNIC GROUPS

Assimilation	Vietnamese				Cambodian				Laotian			
	Indo.		Non-Indo.		Indo.		Non-Indo.		Indo.		Non-Indo.	
	R's		R's		R's		R's		R's		R's	
TOTAL	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	12	100	17	100	10	100	11	100	11	100	10	10
Extremely Good	6	50	5	30	1	10	1	9	1	9	0	-
Good	5	42	8	47	3	30	4	36	3	27	3	30
Fair	1	8	3	17	5	50	5	46	5	46	6	60
Poor	0	-	1	6	1	10	1	9	2	18	1	10
Extremely Poor	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-

Respondents felt that Vietnamese children had made a much better assimilation than Cambodian or Laotian children. Indeed, a majority of respondents categorized the Cambodian and Laotian children's assimilation as fair or worse. Cambodian children apparently were assimilating slightly better than Laotian children, according to the respondents. A larger proportion of Indochinese respondents (92 percent) than non-Indochinese respondents (77 percent) categorized the assimilation of Vietnamese children as being good or extremely good. (It is difficult to make comparisons between the Cambodian and Laotian children, as perceived by Indochinese and non-Indochinese respondents, because of the small numbers involved.)

Findings: Educational Cross-Cultural Differences/Cultural Conflicts

Respondents were asked to respond to a list of possible problems for Indochinese students and to indicate whether each was always, usually, sometimes or never a problem. Instructions to the respondents indicated that "don't know" was an acceptable response. Also, it was explained that the items were written in a very terse form, and they should not hesitate to inquire about the meaning of items that may be difficult to understand. It was also pointed out that the "other" category at the end of the list should be used to indicate important problems not included on the original list. The data generated by these series of questions are given in Table 2.5.

TABLE 2.5
POSSIBLE PROBLEMS FOR INDOCHINESE STUDENTS

Possible Problems	Total Responding		Always		Usually		Sometimes		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Incorrect grade placement	18	100	3	17	9	49	3	17	3	17
Grading system	12	100	0	-	1	8	4	34	7	58
Numerous tests during semester	12	100	0	-	1	8	4	34	7	58
General confusion about American educational system	17	100	3	20	7	43	5	23	2	14
Reliance on classroom lectures, rather than textbooks	14	100	1	7	3	21	4	29	6	43
Homogeneous school programs (which do not distinguish between socioeconomic status and academic background)	14	100	1	7	1	7	1	7	11	79
No official school records	16	100	5	31	6	37	3	19	2	13
Sex education	14	100	1	7	6	43	4	29	3	21
Nonseparation of boys and girls	15	100	0	-	1	6	7	49	7	47
Parental pressure to study/succeed	16	100	0	-	4	25	4	25	8	50
Other pressure to succeed	15	100	0	-	2	13	4	27	9	60
Study habits	17	100	1	5	4	24	4	24	8	47
Passive relationship to teacher	16	100	2	11	5	32	6	38	3	19
Embarrassment caused by names	16	100	0	-	4	25	8	50	4	25
Shyness or inappropriate smiling	16	100	3	19	3	19	9	56	1	6
Food and eating manners	17	100	0	-	3	18	11	65	3	18
Racial prejudice	17	100	0	-	3	18	11	65	3	18
Body language	4	100	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	-
Health and dental	3	100	0	-	0	-	3	100	0	-

The original list of items was derived from the literature that was reviewed earlier in this chapter. Interestingly, some discrepancy exists between the literature and the information collected in our recent survey. In contrast to the literature, this study's respondents generally did not consider the following items a problem. Apparently, children adjusted to these differences quickly:

- o Grading system, numbers are used in Indochina versus letters in the United States.
- o Homogeneous school programs (which do not distinguish between socioeconomic status and academic background), in the United States, compared with (some) separate programs in Indochina.
- o Nonseparation of boys and girls, in United States schools, compared with separation of the sexes in Indochinese schools.

In addition, respondents considered three more items to be assets for the children--not problems.

- o Parental pressure to study/succeed, which is reported to be quite severe.
- o Pressure to succeed from other family members and peer groups.
- o Excellent study habits of students.

The following items were considered to be always or usually problems:

- o Incorrect grade placement of children coming into the United States school system (66 percent).
- o General confusion about American educational system (63 percent).
- o Children not having official school records when arriving in the United States (67 percent).
- o Sex education in California schools--this subject is not taught in Indochinese schools (50 percent).

Considered to be sometimes or never a problem were the following items:

- o Reliance on classroom lectures in Indochinese schools, rather than textbooks in California schools (72 percent).
- o Students' passive relationship to teacher (57 percent).
- o Embarrassment to students caused by funny or bad-sounding names (75 percent).
- o Shyness or inappropriate smiling (62 percent).
- o Food and eating manners (94 percent).

o Racial prejudice (82 percent).

Respondents were asked how well they thought that Indochinese children are integrating into our schools. The answers to this open-ended question were then categorized according to degree of integration, from extremely good to extremely poor. These data are given in Table 2.6 below.

TABLE 2.6
DEGREE OF INTEGRATION INTO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Integration	Indochinese Respondents		Non-Indochinese Respondents		Total Respondents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
TOTAL	6	100	12	100	18	100
Extremely Good	2	34	2	16	4	22
Good	3	50	4	34	7	39
Fair	1	16	4	34	5	28
Poor	0	-	2	16	2	11
Extremely Poor	0	-	0	-	0	-

More than six in ten (61 percent) felt that the children's integration was good or extremely good, 28 percent felt it was fair, and the remaining 11 percent considered it poor. Although the numbers are small when the data are divided according to the ethnic background of the respondents, there is some indication that Indochinese respondents believed that the children are integrating much better than did non-Indochinese respondents.

Only about half of the respondents reported differences in integration among the various Indochinese groups. The integration of Vietnamese children is reportedly best, while that for ethnic Chinese children is considered good. Next came Cambodian children, and it is unclear whether Laotian or Hmong have the poorest integration. All respondents felt that there were definite differences in integration between early and late arrivals, with the early arrivals integrating best.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how well they thought that Indochinese children are succeeding in our schools. These results were also categorized into five points of a continuum and are presented as Table 2.7.

TABLE 2.7
DEGREE OF SUCCESS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Success	Indochinese Respondents		Non-Indochinese Respondents		Total Respondents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
TOTAL	7	100	7	100	14	100
Extremely Good	1	14	2	29	3	22
Good	5	72	4	57	9	64
Fair	1	14	0	-	1	7
Poor	0	-	1	14	1	7
Extremely Poor	0	-	0	-	0	-

Clearly, respondents overwhelmingly felt that children were succeeding quite well: 86 percent felt the success was good or extremely good; 7 percent, fair; and 7 percent, poor. It is interesting that respondents felt that the children were more successful at succeeding than integrating. Differences in school success between the Indochinese groups and early and later arrivals paralleled those for school integration reported above.

The following reasons were given for the children's success:

- o Hard work
- o Discipline
- o Motivation
- o Infrequent participation in extracurricular activities
- o Parental pressure/family honor
- o Peer tutors
- o Supportive teachers
- o Good teaching materials and facilities

The question of how much impact that Indochinese children have had on public schools brought mixed results, with positive impacts (60 percent) having the edge over negative ones. Among the positive effects mentioned were less behavioral problems, employment of bilingual low-income aides, and retention of teachers in previously dwindling population centers. On the negative side, lower test scores and the effects of crowded schools--such as shortened days and insufficient materials--were mentioned.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS SURVEY

Introduction

In response to new federal (DHEW) reporting requirements, a survey was conducted by DSS 25/ to gather and update information on all unaccompanied minors.

Included in the sample were children identified as having been placed in out-of-home care and others known by the California reporting agencies. A reporting form was developed (CA 900) and copies were sent to all county welfare departments. Survey forms were completed during January and February 1980 for cases active during July 1979 through February 1980.

A total of 434 survey forms were returned to the DSS. Of these, 401 (93 percent) were from six counties and comprised the sample to be employed for analytical purposes. Of the 401, 31 were excluded because of incomplete information or because the youth was over 18-years and emancipated, and the final sample size was 370 (85 percent of the forms received). Table 2.8, which follows, gives the six counties with their proportionate share of the total sample.

25/ Specialized Programs Bureau.

TABLE 2.8
COUNTIES WITH THE LARGEST UNACCOMPANIED MINOR CASELOADS

	Number	Percent
TOTAL	370	100%
Los Angeles	7	2
Orange	103	28
Sacramento	10	2
San Diego	174	47
San Francisco	40	11
Santa Clara	36	10

Clearly, a considerable number of cases are not included in the individual county subsamples, and the counties proportionate share does not approximate their share of the state's Indochinese population. For example, Los Angeles with 35 percent of the state's Indochinese had only 2 percent of the minors in the sample. The cases that are included are those for which counties had documentation; apparently, no case records exist for large number of minors. Therefore, the data presented in this section cannot be considered definite or error-free; we have no way of assessing how these data would compare to those for the missing cases. At worst, we can consider these data to be indicative; at best, representative of all unaccompanied minors in California.

Findings

(1) Age. More than half of the sample (54 percent) was 16 to 18 years of age, and an additional 30 percent were between 11 and 15 years. San Francisco County had a higher proportion of older youths (75 percent were 16 to 18 years) and Orange County had a lower proportion of older youths (43 percent fell in this same one group). 26/

TABLE 2.9
AGE

Age Category	Number	Percentage
TOTAL	370	100
10 or less	21	6
11-15	110	30
16-18	200	54
Over 18	35	9
Unknown	4	1

(2) Sex. Males (77 percent) were much more prominently represented in the sample than females (23 percent). San Francisco had a higher percentage of males (90 percent) and Orange had a lower percentage (70 percentage) than the six county percentages.

26/ Los Angeles and Sacramento are not included in the comparisons between counties because of the very small subsamples.

- (3) Type of current placement. The most common placement was with a foster family (86 percent), followed by a guardian (11 percent) and, lastly, a supervised independent living arrangement (3 percent). No group home or institution placements were reported. All but one of the placements with a guardian were in Orange County, and all but one of the supervised independent living arrangements were in San Diego County.
- (4) Foster care provider. One-third of the placements was with American families, and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) were with Indochinese. (We could not make this differentiation in 4 percent of the cases.) Placements with Indochinese families were more common in Santa Clara (72 percent) and San Diego (71 percent) counties and less common in Orange (58 percent) and San Francisco (43 percent) counties.
- (5) Relations with adults and peers. Social relationships were judged satisfactory in 79 percent and unsatisfactory in 12 percent of the cases. (For the remaining 9 percent, the information was not available.) Actually, the six county percentage satisfactory was depressed by Santa Clara County with only 47 percent of the cases judged satisfactory. The rating for the other counties ranged between 72 percent (San Francisco County) and 84 percent (Orange County). For all six counties, the reason given for unsatisfactory relations was inadequate social assimilation.
- (6) Physical health. No physical health problems were reported for 66 percent of the cases; only 17 percent reported problems (and the information was not available for 17 percent). San Diego County apparently had the healthiest minors (84 percent had no problems), San Francisco County had

the least healthiest (35 percent), with Santa Clara and Orange counties falling in between (58 percent and 53 percent, respectively). For cases with physical problems, general health problems were the most frequent type reported, followed by dental problems.

- (7) Emotional well-being. Emotional problems were not common among the minors: problems were reported for 17 percent, and the information was not available for the remaining 5 percent. The incidence of mental problems was much higher in Santa Clara (39 percent) and San Francisco (37 percent) than in Orange (12 percent) and San Diego (11 percent) counties. Inadequate social assimilation was the most common reason given for emotional problems.

- (8) English-speaking ability. Exactly 50 percent of the cases required training in English, and an additional 36 percent were above average in English-speaking ability. (The information was not available for 14 percent.) The youth in San Francisco (53 percent) and San Diego (56 percent) counties apparently needed more training in English than their counterparts in Santa Clara (50 percent) and Orange (36 percent) counties.

- (9) School achievement. Sixty-two percent were reported doing well in school, 23 percent were having difficulty, with information for the remainder (15 percent) being unknown. Students in San Diego (68 percent) and Santa Clara (67 percent) counties were doing better than those in Orange (56 percent) and San Francisco (47 percent) counties. The most frequent reason given for having difficulty in school was inadequate social assimilation, with emotional and physical problems being reported as the reason for a few cases.

(10) Educational and vocational plans. Seventy-one percent planned to continue their education. Of these, 35 percent planned to attend high school, and an additional 35 percent planned to attend college. There was no case plan for 6 percent, as shown in Table 2.10.

TABLE 2.10
EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL PLANS

Plan to Attend	Number	Percent of Total	Percent With Plans
TOTAL	370	100	100
High School/ College	91 92	25 25	35 35
Vocational/Trade School	73	20	28
Unspecified School	5	1	1
No Plans	24	6	-
Not Available	85	23	-

Whether problems indicated for educational and vocational plans. Problems were indicated in nearly half of the cases (48 percent). Minors in San Francisco and Santa Clara had a larger percentage of problems indicated in their plans (60 percent and 58 percent respectively) than did those in San Diego and Orange (45 percent and 43 percent, respectively). The problems indicated, in descending order, were inadequate social assimilation, language, health, and dental. Services to be provided to alleviate the problems included ESL classes, medical, and supportive services.



CHAPTER 3. BACKGROUND

"There is no end in sight to the
refugee flow from Indochinese."

Victor H. Palmieri
U.S. Ambassador for Refugee Affairs

INTRODUCTION

More than one million Indochinese have fled Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia since Communist governments took over these countries in the spring of 1975.

Conditions within Indochina, such as persecution against ethnic Chinese and persons associated with the former non-Communist governments, have resulted in a

continuation of this exodus. These refugees have sought asylum in neighboring countries, principally Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. 1/

Although worldwide attention has focused on the refugees arriving in countries of first asylum by boat ("boat people"), a significant minority arrived in these neighboring countries by land (245,500 for the latter and 277,000 for the former as of September 1979). According to on-site evaluations of a medical consultant, University of California, Irvine, psychiatrist Jean E. Carlin, camps of people arriving by land were much worse than those occupied by persons arriving by boat. 2/ Dr. Carlin had expected to find the Vietnamese boat people, who had braved the South China Sea and lost many lives, to be malnourished, without adequate supplies, isolated, and discouraged. Instead, she found them to be fairly healthy, energetic, enthusiastic, friendly, trusting, and hopeful. They were organizing and building their "villages" and were permitted much self-determination and self-government.

Dr. Carlin anticipated the land people's camps to be safer, more developed, and under better control. Rather, she found poor living conditions, inadequate food supplies, and medical care varying from barely adequate to totally inadequate.

1/ United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs. Refugee Fact Sheet, "Indochinese Resettlement in the United States." Special Report No. 68, February 1980.

2/ Jean E. Carlin "Report of a Medical Consultant's observations of and Recommendations for Indochinese (Southeast Asian) Refugee Camps. (Distributed by World Airways.) October 1979.

In camps with inadequate medical care, she found "infants and children actually starving to death" (p. 15). 3/ Cambodian refugees were described as "shell shocked" or stunned by all the tragedies they witnessed and experienced during their escapes.

Most adult and children of the Hmong, people who fled from the hills of Laos, were not receiving adequate food and were apathetic, listless, not smiling, reticent, and lacking in energy and initiative. Because of "racial discrimination if not genocide", the Hmong were isolated together in the most overcrowded and worse camps (p. 5). 4/ Various refugee workers have reported that refugees are hopeful for the first six months in camps, after which time hope tends to dissipate and is replaced by despondency and demoralization. Long camp stays (since 1975) are commonplace among the Hmong.

This refugee exodus was perceived as a threat to regional stability, and countries of first asylum were unable or unwilling to integrate the refugees into their own societies for three principal reasons: (1) Overcrowding, disease, and discontent are bred when the numbers of incoming persons far exceeds those leaving; (2) these are third-world countries with their own unique problems in need of immediate solution; and (3) these countries are trying to keep communism out of their own countries by struggling to keep peace with their communist neighbors.

3/ Ibid.

4/ Ibid.

Therefore, the burden of resettlement has fallen to the international community. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has responsibility for protecting the rights of the refugees, financing their care in camps operated by host-country governments, and arranging for their resettlement in other countries. UN Secretary General Waldheim convened a ministerial-level meeting of over 60 interested nations in Geneva on July 20-21, 1979, which resulted in pledges of about 260,000 resettlement offers over the next 18 months. The meeting also produced about \$190 million in new contributions to Indochinese refugee programs. 5/ At the Geneva conference, Vice President Mondale reiterated President Carter's pledge to double the US admission rate from 7,000 to 14,000 Indochinese per month. As of February 1980, approximately 270,000 Indochinese refugees were still in camps awaiting offers of resettlement. 6/

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Major Resettlement Countries

Offers for permanent resettlement have come from 38 countries. In absolute numbers, the United States is the leading resettlement country (290,000 - 300,000), followed by China (over 260,000), France (60,000), Canada (35,000), and Australia (33,000). In per capita acceptance, Australia is the leading country, followed by the United States and France (with equivalent rates) and Canada. 7/

5/ United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs. "Gist", January 1980.

6/ Refugee Fact Sheet, op. cit.

7/ Ibid.

Some countries who are reluctant to accept refugees are pledging financial support - Japan being a case in point with a pledge of \$160 million in aid. 8/

Resettlement In the United States 9/

Before beginning this discussion of refugee resettlement in the United States, it is instructive to provide a comparative perspective, by detailing how extreme the differences are between East and West/Indochinese and Americans. The differences are extreme, and they cover every aspect of existence, as the following two tables illustrate: 10/

8/ Jean E. Carlin, October 1979, op. cit.

9/ This section borrows heavily from Refugee Fact Sheet, op. cit.

10/ Additional comparative information for children and their families is given at the beginning of Chapter 2.

TABLE 3.1

CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST 11/

<u>Item</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
Religion	Monotheistic	Pantheistic, Polytheistic, Spiritualistic, Humanistic
Culture	Christian	Hinduist, Buddhist, Confucianist, Taoist
Civilization	Industrial (man over nature, development of science and technology)	Agricultural (harmony between man and nature, no development of science and technology)
Philosophy	Speculative	Contemplative
Philosophy of Life	Materialistic	Self-realization (The moral self)
	Individualism	Altruism
	Achievement, power prestige	Concept of lineality, mutual dependence, love for all men
	Individual autonomy	Reconciling and harmonizing tendencies
	Competition, aggression	
	Activity	Living more with the past
	Future orientation	Esteem for hierarchy Esteem for nature

11/ Adapted from Tran Van Mai. "Cross-Cultural Understanding and its Implications in Counseling." Printed in "Indochinese Health Care." A Conference for Health Professionals, San Diego, California, November 27, 1979.

TABLE 3.2
DIFFERENCES IN VALUE ORIENTATIONS BETWEEN
AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE ^{12/}

<u>Item</u>	<u>Americans</u>	<u>Vietnamese</u>
Human nature orientation	"Human nature is basically evil but perfectible."	"Human nature is basically good but corruptible."
Man - nature orientation	Mastery over nature	Harmony between man and nature
Time orientation	Living with future time	Living with the past
Space orientation	Living with movement, migration, and mobility	Attached to nature or ancestor land - immobile
Activity orientation	Doing, getting things done	"Being-in-becoming"
Relation orientation	Individual autonomy, self-reliance	Lineality, mutual dependence

Now that we have briefly traced the refugees from their countries of origin, to their countries of first asylum, resettlement in the United States will now be discussed. The refugee program of the United States has been liberalized by the recently passed Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212, March 17, 1980). Major provisions of the Act follow:

- o Adopts the UN protocol on refugees, rather than accepting refugees on the basis of outmoded geographic and ideological criteria;

^{12/} Adapted from Nguyen Quoc Tri. "Culture and Technical Assistance in Public Administration. A study of What Can be Transferred from the United States to Vietnam." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1970.

- o Allows the President to set the number of refugees to be admitted each year;
- o Reduces the period from two years to one year that refugees are required to wait before adjusting status to that of permanent resident alien; and
- o Authorizes the Federal Government to reimburse the state and local governments for 100 percent of their costs of assisting refugees for three years after the refugee's arrival in the United States (this last provision will go into effect on April 1, 1981).

Persons wishing to resettle in the United States must meet all requirements of U.S. immigration law, including a medical and security screening. Special preference is given to refugees having special ties to the United States through family or past employment. Training and orientation programs have been implemented in the new processing centers in the Philippines and Indonesia for some refugees with guarantees of eventual resettlement in the United States. Refugees approved for immigration, and having secured sponsorship in the United States, are moved from refugee camps to transit centers for medical screening and processing. The screening is done by the Public Health Service (PHS), working with the Department of State and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM). Only four percent of all refugees screened are found to have an excludable disease; and many of these persons eventually enter the United States often eradicating the disease by medical treatment. Chartered or commercial aircraft are employed to bring the refugees to the United States with their medical records. U.S. ports of entry are major medical processing points, with PHS quarantine officers on duty to review medical records and visually assess each refugee.

A primary role in refugee resettlement is played by the voluntary resettlement agencies (Volags) who receive a \$500 per capita grant from the Department of State to assist in the reception and placement of refugees. The grant often meets only a part of the cost of assistance. These agencies, some sectarian and others nonsectarian, either act as a sponsor themselves or find a sponsor for each refugee. The sponsor is not required to provide financial support or assume legal responsibility for the refugee, but does assume a moral obligation to help the refugee adjust to the new environment.

PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD REFUGEES

What kind of a reception did the Indochinese refugees receive from the American public? The first wave of refugees (in 1975) arrived at a time when the rate of unemployment was nearly nine percent. A Gallup Poll in 1975 reported that a majority of Americans (54 percent) felt that the Vietnamese should not be permitted to stay in this country. Many Americans feared that an influx of refugees would mean added competition for scarce jobs and longer public assistance rolls. ^{13/} The long and frustrating military involvement in South Vietnam might have been partially responsible for the negative and hostile feelings toward these refugees. This negative attitude was much more pronounced compared with any of the earlier refugee movements in this country. ^{14/}

^{13/} Darrel Montero. "Vietnamese Americans: Patterns of Resettlement and Socioeconomic Adaptation in the United States." Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1979.

^{14/} Julia Vadala Taft, David S. North, and David A. Ford. "Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus." Report prepared for SSA/DHEW by New Transcentury Foundation, Washington, D.C., July 31, 1979.

Public opinion had not improved four years later, as evidenced by the efforts from President Carter's pledge to double the number of refugees. Polls show the American people opposing the doubling of the quota of refugees admitted each month. Despite regular shocking reports on the plight of the refugees - "no exodus has ever had this accumulation of horror", according to Charles Sternberg, executive director of the International Rescue Committee - there is little public outcry in the United States. 15/ Rather, negative public opinion has been increasing significantly, as newly arriving refugees have caused strains in many communities by settling in areas in which the job and housing markets are highly competitive. 16/ A call-in poll sponsored by the San Francisco Chronicle found that 73 percent of 24,000 persons responding opposed the influx of boat people. 17/ A DHEW Secretarial Report anticipates more violence and demonstrations, given existing programs and resources.

Considerable hostility and violence toward refugees has in fact occurred, as the following examples illustrate:

- o Boats of Vietnamese fishermen have been burned in Seadrift, Texas because of tensions between refugees and American fishermen. The Vietnamese have been accused of undercutting market prices and of violating longstanding "gentleman's agreements". Tension is also caused by the Vietnamese fishermen working longer and harder, for less money, and working in rougher weather, than their American counterparts.

15/ Jeffrey Levi. The Vietnamese Refugees, Dissent, Fall 1979, pp. 369-370, 467.

16/ DHEW "Indochinese Refugee Assessment." Secretarial Report, September 28, 1979. Service Delivery Assessment, Region X with Regions I, II, III, IV, VI and IX.

17/ "The Not-So-Promised Land?" Time, September 10, 1979.

- o A brick-and-bottle battle between Vietnamese and their Chicano neighbors resulted in 18 refugee families fleeing from their dilapidated housing project in Denver. The Chicanos had mistakenly thought that their neighbors had fought against the U.S. in Vietnam. 18/
- o Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics in Lancaster, Pennsylvania were displeased to see Vietnamese refugees receiving financial aid from the government, favorable publicity from the press, and jobs and promotions they felt belonged to them. 19/

(Parenthetically, although the United States expects to admit 126,000 Indochinese refugees from January through September 1980, bringing the total number admitted [since the spring of 1975] to about 415,000, the impact on population growth and on the labor market will be small. During the coming year, refugees will increase the size of the labor market by only seven one-hundredths of one percent. An estimated 70,000 will be added to the 105 million person labor force, about one worker for every 1,500 established workers. 20/)

- o Elder persons thrashed several refugees with their fishing poles at a Lake Michigan, Wisconsin fishing pier. The retirees felt that the refugees had intruded on their favorite fishing spot.

18/ The first two items were extracted from Time, September 10, 1979, op. cit., p. 24.

19/ John L. Moore, "Oriental Influence: Vietnamese Refugees Sink Roots in the U.S. Two Years After Arrival". Wall Street Journal, November 27, 1977.

20/ Refugee Fact Sheet, op. cit.

- o In order to protest special treatment received by refugees in government welfare, housing and employment programs, several dozen Chicano youths in Denver smashed the windows of refugees' cars and apartments. 21/

The refugee reaction to all this negativity can possibly be gleaned from an assertion by a Vietnamese refugee:

"They seem so angry about us trying to stay alive. I don't know why we must be so much their enemy. (p. 12)." 22/

STATE AND COUNTY RESIDENCE OF REFUGEES

The Federal Government's plan to distribute refugees throughout the United States has been markedly unsuccessful. As of December 31, 1979, California had one-third (95,539) of the country's (289,279) refugees residing within its

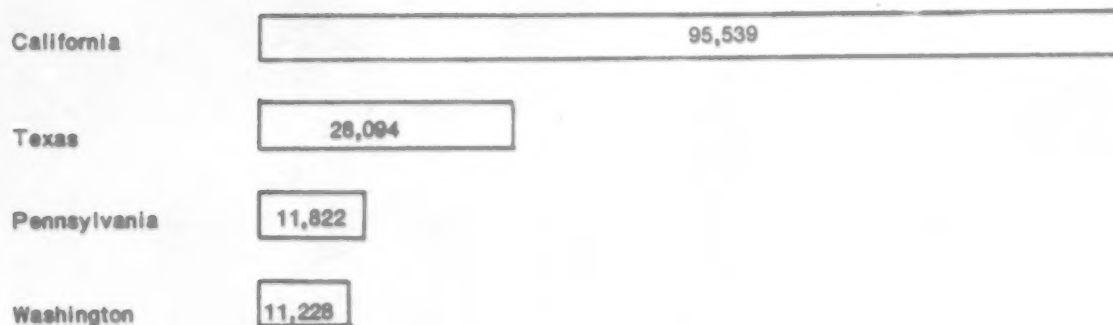
21/ Source of the last two items: Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom. "Refugees Mean Problems For Cities - And for the Carter Administration." National Journal, February 16, 1980.

22/ DHEW Secretarial Report, op. cit.

borders. ^{23/} California had approximately 3.5 times more refugees than Texas, the state second in refugee population. Only three states had refugee populations exceeding 11,000: Texas (28,094), Pennsylvania (11,822), and Washington (11,228). Taken together, these four states accounted for a majority (51.1 percent) of the refugees in this country. The disproportionate share of refugees in California is illustrated below:

FIGURE 3.1

STATES WITH MAJOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS



^{23/} Numbers were derived from a chart compiled by the (California) Governor's Indochinese Refugee Task Force, using data from the (federal) Office of Refugee Affairs, DHEW/SSA. Nguyen Van Hanh, project director of California's Office of Refugee Affairs, estimates the current (May 1980) refugee population in California to be 110,000. The Estimates Bureau, California Department of Social Services, recently (May 14, 1980) estimated California's total refugee population to be nearly 100,000. Most recently (August 13, 1980), DSS's Public Information Office and Office of Refugee Services estimated that 122,000 refugees have resettled in California.

Regardless of where refugees are resettled in the United States, they are persistently and continually moving to California. Many factors account for this important phenomenon of secondary migration:

1. Well-organized sponsorship program;
2. Family reunification;
3. Existing large Indochinese communities, thereby facilitating assimilation into established communities;
4. Availability of jobs;
5. A high aid payment standard compared to many other states; and
6. Warm climate, which is much closer to the tropical weather to which refugees are accustomed. 24/

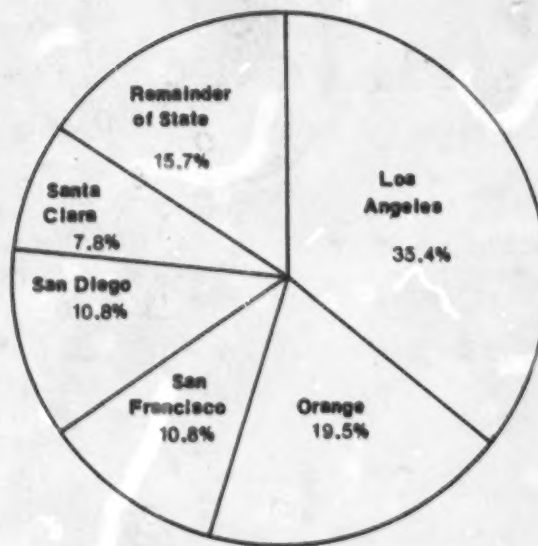
24/ Sacramento Bee, August 25, 1979. "Magnet for Refugees...Flood of Indochinese Burdens Aid in State", by Penelope McMillan, Los Angeles Times.

As of December 31, 1979, nearly 70 percent of the Indochinese resettled in California were living in Southern California. 25/ And 66 percent of these were living in three counties: Los Angeles (33,823), Orange (18,643), and San Diego (10,318). Los Angeles County, which alone had 35 percent of the state's Indochinese population, had nearly twice as many refugees as Orange, the county with the second largest concentration of refugees. The San Francisco Bay Area contains another large pocket of refugees. Two counties - San Francisco (10,360) and Santa Clara (7,488) have 19 percent of the state's total refugee population. An overwhelming 84 percent of California's refugees reside in the five counties discussed above - this is graphically illustrated in the following pie chart:

25/ All numbers of refugees in California counties are official estimates, albeit conservative, prepared by the Population Research Unit, Department of Finance.

FIGURE 3.2

CALIFORNIA COUNTIES WITH MAJOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS



NEW ARRIVALS: PROBLEMS, PERSPECTIVES AND PROGNOSIS

Culture Shock

The following description of 396 Indochinese refugees arriving at California's Travis Air Force Base illustrates the initial culture shock: 26/

26/ "The Not-So-Promised Land?". Time, September 10, 1979, p. 24.

"After a briefing in Khmer and Lao and the processing of health forms, the refugees were hustled aboard buses and taken to a Travelodge motel for introductory lessons on American life: how to operate light switches, how to use a toilet. Many stood on the motel's second-floor balcony and stared uncomprehendingly at the rush of traffic below. Others squatted on the pink sidewalk and simply gazed at their feet. They had journeyed several centuries in 19 hours, and the shock would be a long time wearing off. (Emphasis added.)"

However, some shock may have set in before the refugees arrived in this country. According to one report, Vietnamese refugees were briefed on various aspects of American life by persons from voluntary agencies and the U.S. State Department. Among things they were told were the following: Do not attempt to communicate with their families and friends in Vietnam lest the Communists harm them, making them feel lost and without roots; other minority ethnic groups might be hostile to them; and accepting welfare would have an adverse effect on later employment. 27/ It is understandable that refugees, when they first arrived, were in shock, confused, and deeply despondent.

A U.S. General Accounting Office report mentioned that some refugees, particularly the Lac Hmong, are virtually unexposed to Western culture. They must be taught such elementary things as to diaper their babies and not burn firewood on top of their stoves. In discussing refugees who had recently settled in her community, San Jose (California), Mayor Janet Gray Hayes asserted that they

27/ Tran Trung Nhu. "The Trauma of Exile: Vietnam Refugees". Civil Rights Digest, Vol. 9, No. 1, Fall 1976, pp. 59-62.

"don't even know how to take an aspirin" and "are rubbing herbs on their skin. They are peasants who have a huge cultural shock when they come to our community." 28/

However, there is some evidence that culture shock is prevalent among Vietnamese refugees who have been in this country for several years. Vuong Thuy, on the faculty of Philadelphia Temple University, asserts that the 1975 Vietnamese immigrants were still suffering from culture shock (in November 1977), although their adjustment had been relatively good. Thus, the culture shock appears to be a lingering phenomenon. 29/

Culture shock has even lead to legal difficulties. Vietnamese refugees, not used to shopping centers, have been charged with shoplifting, because they do not realize that they had to pay at each store within the complex. 30/ Other problems which may be associated with culture shock are discussed later in this section.

28/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom. "Refugees Mean Problems for Cities - And for the Carter Administration." National Journal, February 16, 1980, pp. 273-275.

29/ John L. Moore. "Vietnamese Refugees Sink Roots in the U.S.", Wall Street Journal, October 27, 1977.

30/ "Making It in America - Story of the Vietnamese". U.S. News and World Report. November 27, 1978, pp. 45-46.

Differences Between Early and Later Arrivals

In an article being prepared for possible publication, Dr. Jean Carlin compares recent arrivals to earlier arrivals. 31/ Compared to the early arrivals (1975-76), the later arriving Indochinese refugees had the following characteristics in common: They were (1) poorly educated, (2) less proficient in English or without English, (3) in poorer health, (4) in little or no contact with Western culture, and in camps for longer stays.

Sister Susan Kam, director of the Catholic Welfare Bureau's Los Angeles County Indochina social services demonstration project, in comparing 1975 arrivals to newcomers, said: "Now they speak less English, they're more lowly educated, they don't even know how to use a bathroom, a shower, don't know what to do with a stove - things we take for granted." 32/

Some major findings of the DHEW Secretarial Report can be used to sum up this section: "Most refugees are living in marginal circumstances; they speak little English, are trapped in the secondary job market or on welfare, and live in overcrowded, ghetto-like housing. New arrivals have less education, little skilled employment experience and more serious health problems than 'old wave' refugees." 33/

31/ Adapted from Jean E. Carlin. Boat and Land Refugees: "Mental Health Implications for the Recent Arrivals Compared with Earlier Arrivals". May 1980 (mimeographed).

32/ Penelope McMillan. "Magnet for Refugees...Flood of Indochinese Burdens Aid in State", Sacramento Bee, August 25, 1979.

33/ DHEW. "Indochinese Refugee Assessment", Secretarial Report. September 28, 1979.

Problems/Needs of New Arrivals 34/

The latest arrivals do have one important advantage over the early arrivals. Many are joining family members who are already established in thriving communities, particularly the Vietnamese. Unlike previous immigrants, the early Indochinese refugees were deliberately separated from the ethnic unit they needed. This unity is important for permitting the social support, strength, and mutual self-help efforts which, taken together, facilitate integrating into American society. 35/

According to a Lao Hmong refugee:

"Other Indochinese people make me to be happy and make me to forget my loneliness, helplessness and hopelessness in this country (p. 1). 36/

34/ California has long had a policy of doing everything possible to ameliorate refugee problems. As part of these efforts, Governor Brown created a task force in July 1979 to assist refugees and coordinate government and private aid in the state. Health and Welfare Agency Secretary Mario Obledo appointed Nguyen Van Hanh to coordinate the task force and later to be project director of the newly created Office of Refugee Affairs at the Agency level. On April 18, 1980, DSS Director Marion Woods announced the creation of a Refugee Services Office. Ms. Jo Frederick, who was appointed as Chief of the new office, was given the responsibility for coordinating and providing DSS services to the refugee population.

35/ Time, September 10, 1979, op. cit.

36/ DHEW Secretarial, Report, op. cit.

In addition to social supports, many other important problems/needs exist:

1. English training. This is the single most important need. The ability to communicate in the English language is the most critical factor in achieving self-sufficiency. A study conducted for the California Department of Health (in 1977) found the ability to speak English to be highly positively correlated with being employed. 37/

The Vietnamese have had more previous exposure to English and require less help than the Cambodians and Laotians. Young persons, males, and the educated are more proficient in English than older persons, females, and the noneducated. 38/ The need for adult English classes is evident. 39/ Speaking in French, a Vietnamese former professor of philosophy, exclaimed:

"It is not the custodial work that disturbs me, it is that I cannot understand or articulate a few small phrases in good English. Even if I use the English I have learned since I arrived here three and a half months ago, nobody seems to know what I am saying (p. 229)." 40/

37/ Jacqueline S. Aames and others. "Indochinese Refugee Self-Sufficiency in California: A Survey and Analysis of the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Lao and the Agencies that Serve Them." Report submitted to the California State Department of Health, September 30, 1977.

38/ Ibid.

39/ Paul Galloway. Chicago Sun-Times. "California No. 1 State for Refugees from Indochina". Printed in Los Angeles Times, November 29, 1979 and William Wong, "Vietnamese Refugees Find it Hard to Adjust to New Lives in U.S.". Wall Street Journal, September 20, 1976.

40/ Marianne B. McCarthy. "Continuing Education for the Vietnamese: A New Challenge". Adult Leadership, Vol. 24, No. 7, March 1976, pp. 229-230, 235.

2. Employment/vocational training. The study done for the California Department of Health reported that a significant proportion of the Indochinese want to become skilled craftsman; many do not aspire to getting the same sort of job in the U.S. that they had in Indochina. Former military personnel have had the most success, and farmers and fishermen were having the greatest difficulty, in finding employment. Average earned income differed by ethnic group: the Vietnamese earned the most, the Cambodians slightly less, and the Laotians considerably less. Transportation was felt to be an important obstacle to employment by most of the Laotians, almost half the Cambodians, and over a third of the Vietnamese. Child care was also a concern, particularly for the Laotians. 41/

Vietnamese refugees, according to one study, have experienced severe downward mobility in their first American jobs. Many were not satisfied with their work primarily because it was temporary, not in line with their training, too demanding, or future advancement was not possible. 42/ The following data, adapted from the same report, illustrates the substantial shifts from professional occupations in Vietnam to nonprofessional ones in the U.S. for the earliest refugees:

- 41/ Aames and others, op. cit. This order is changed for average financial assistance: The Laotians received the highest, followed by the Vietnamese, and the Cambodians received the least.
- 42/ Barry N. Stein. "Occupational Adjustment of Refugees: The Vietnamese in the United States." International Migration Review, Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 1979, pp. 25-45.

TABLE 3.3

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED
OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES

Vietnam Occupation	In Vietnam	In United States	
		3 Months	27 Months
Professional/managerial	45%	8%	9%
Craftsman	14	16	30
Laborers	--	12	7
Other blue collar	14	34	24

Vocational training is a pressing need. A resettlement director is cited by the Wall Street Journal as saying: "Every dish in San Francisco is being washed by refugees." 43/ The U.S. resettlement program forces refugees into either private sector employment or public sector welfare. Public employment, or publicly funded training for employment, is available to few refugees because of their legal status; being aliens, they are largely barred from federal employment; and being parolees, they are likely to have a difficult time securing state or local public employment. 44/ (This problem is discussed in a little more detail below.)

C. P. Cheung, a professor at California State University, Los Angeles, describes the plight of many newcomers who do not receive adequate assistance:

43/ September 20, 1976, op. cit.

44/ Julia Vadala Taft, op. cit.

"They are thrown into the community. They cannot find jobs, they don't have furniture, just sit on the floor. They have all kinds of daily survival problems. They are just forced into welfare programs." 45/

The DHEW Secretarial Report quoted one Vietnamese refugee as saying:

"We want in the near future to have a job and not be a problem to the government (p. 1)." 46/

3. Legal status. The refugees' legal status as "parolees" inhibits their opportunities. Under current law, they are not regarded as moving toward permanent residence or citizenship in the United States. Therefore, they may not be permitted to hold many government or other jobs requiring at least permanent resident status. Military service, which would appeal to some young males who had been soldiers, is not an occupational possibility. Their legal status also inhibits attendance at colleges and universities. In many states, refugees are required to pay college tuition at the higher, nonresident rates (although some colleges have waived this rule). 47/

45/ Los Angeles Times, August 25, 1980, op. cit.

46/ Op. cit.

47/ Wall Street Journal, September 20, 1976, op. cit.

4. Housing. This has become the most difficult issue for resettlement officials to resolve. According to a study by the Indochina Refugee Action Center, the most serious housing problems are in Denver, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and San Francisco. For years, large cities have faced shortages of rental apartments and long waiting lists for government-subsidized housing. Numerous instances have been reported (as in Orange County, California, New Orleans and Denver) of as many as 25 refugees crowded into one or two-bedroom apartments. Federal and local officials are afraid to make special provisions for refugees because the competition for housing among refugees and other low-income groups is already intense. 48/
5. Physical Health. The overwhelming majority of refugees are free of significant contagious disease. To date, no serious public health problem linked to refugees has developed anywhere in the United States. Illness tends to be a personal, rather than a public health, problem. Malnutrition, dental diseases, and anemia - all relatively easily treatable - are the most common illnesses found among refugees. 49/ However, cases of tuberculosis, parasites, and hepatitis have been reported despite Federal Government assurances that all refugees have received thorough health examinations both before and after arrival in this country. 50/ The physical examination of the refugees overwhelmed the state health system at first, but screenings at the local level are now proceeding smoothly. 51/

48/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, op. cit.

49/ Refugee Fact Sheet, February 1980, op. cit.

50/ Neal R. Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, op. cit.

51/ Los Angeles Times, November 29, 1979, op. cit.

6. Mental Health

A rather comprehensive nationwide report, sponsored by DHEW IRAP Special Programs staff in Washington, D.C., assessed the current status of mental health problems among the Indochinese refugee population. ^{52/} Over 1,100 organizations were surveyed and site visits were made to eight IRAP funded mental health projects throughout the nation. Results indicated that:

- o The incidence of refugees with mental health problems is nearly impossible to determine for two reasons: (1) A culture resistance exists among refugees to seek help, and (2) refugees who enter the service delivery system are often reported by more than one agency.
- o Most refugees (56 percent) with mental health problems are seen by voluntary agencies, and another 32 percent are seen by IRAP Mental Health Projects.
- o Mental health problems among refugees arriving in 1975 are only beginning to surface now.
- o Depression is the most frequently reported problem, followed by anxiety and marital conflict.
- o The age group 19-35 was most at-risk. This age category contained both single people and married couples. The single people felt excluded from the Indochinese communities in the United States, and appeared to be rootless, changing communities and jobs frequently.

^{52/} Bureau of Research and Training, "National Mental Health Needs Assessment of Indochinese Refugee Population", Office of Mental Health, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, July 1979.

These single people were experiencing depression, thought disorders, feelings of helplessness, alcoholism and are inflicting violence upon themselves or others. Lack of employment and job training opportunities, and lack of appropriate spouses, were also problems for single persons.

Married couples in this 19 to 35 age group were most frequently reported to be experiencing family and marital conflicts. They were reported to be acculturating too quickly, and seemed to have substituted the perceived value system of young Americans for those of their parents and homeland.

- o The Vietnamese appeared to have a broader range of problems, though of less severity than other Indochinese ethnic groups. Vietnamese refugees showed a broader level of anxiety than the other groups and tended to mistrust other members of their own ethnic group. Cambodians were experiencing more severe adjustment problems because they lacked a support group, felt ignored, and were more isolated than other Indochinese ethnic groups. Cambodians were also experiencing severe depression, were feeling helpless and homesick, and lacked job skills. The Lao had physical health problems and found it difficult to adapt to a lowering of their social status. Jealousy and conflict within the Lao community were additional problems.
- o The development of Indochinese community support systems was thought to be of primary importance in assisting refugees in their adjustment.

Jean E. Carlin concludes that acute and chronic grief occurs in all ethnic groups and in many age groups. Those who can correspond with their relatives in their native countries have a more positive emotional response than those who cannot, but the former feel a great deal of responsibility for their families. All refugees experience anxiety about relatives left behind. Depression, bad dreams, and loneliness will probably occur in all ethnic and all age groups as well. Psychosomatic problems of adults and adolescents in all ethnic groups will be higher than the norm because illness is culturally accepted as a way to deal with problems too severe to solve. One possible beneficial psychological effect of the longer camp stays for recent refugees is that they had time - that the early refugees did not have - to work through some of the trauma and grief before coming to the United States. Some direct quotes from Dr. Carlin:

"Amazingly, the refugees...are adjusting well. But underneath these apparently successful and incredibly resilient people have great emotional pain and suffering. The emotional toll is unimaginable. Some will need psychiatric help. Many more will never come to our attention. The problems will affect the entire first and second generations of 'Indochinese-Americans'. They are survivors. They will survive (p. 19)." 53/

A mental health counselor, cited in the DHEW Secretarial Report, echoes Dr. Carlin's comments about the refugees:

"Overall, their resiliency is much more startling than the depression. They are doing much better than they should be, considering what they have been through. These people are survivors - they can do most anything (p. 13)." 54/

Dr. Carlin feels it important to describe the special case of the Hmong. Many Hmong tribespeople fought courageously and effectively with the U.S. special forces. They were not screened for their religious beliefs or customs when they fought with our special forces, but they are screened for resettlement. If they practice polygamy, they are not approved for resettlement. Because of this technicality, a man must either remain in the camp forever or he must get rid of all wives except one. These "Throw Away Wives" must be profoundly depressed and suicidal in their new countries of resettlement. In the Hmong culture, a rejected wife was expected to kill herself. 55/

7. Victimization in California. The vanquished of one society often become the victims of another. Refugees are easy prey, vulnerable targets to anyone disposed to taking advantage of them. Persons lacking ethics and the criminal element have been aware of the large refugee population in California - one in every 200 Californians is an Indochinese refugee - and have used a variety of illegal activities for cheating them. Examples follow:

- o Attorneys and others who promise to reunite families, but who do absolutely nothing for their clients;

54/ Op. cit.

55/ "Report of a Medical Consultants Observations...", op. cit.

- o Vietnamese families put up \$100,000 to buy mobile homes, but were not told that the land on which to keep them does not come with the homes.
- o A man prints up a business card, designating himself "school administrator", and collects \$1,000 per school-age child for school "taxes". Khamchong Luangprasent of Lao Family Community, Inc., in Santa Ana, asserted:

"We have been living in a jungle for a long time in Laos. This is another kind of jungle - a technological and bureaucratic jungle (p. 57)." 56/

College and University Students. 57/ Approximately 49,000 early (1975) Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees were potentially interested in enrolling in American colleges and universities. However, their educational backgrounds were diverse, they were only able to bring with them incomplete documentation of previous academic training, and their previous training was structured according to the French system of higher education. It was therefore difficult and complicated to get refugee students admitted to institutions at the right level.

56/ Jeffrey Kaye, "Yearning to Breathe Free." New West, April 7, 1980, pp. 57-70.

57/ The issue of refugee students being required to pay nonresident's tuition fees is discussed under the "Legal Status" subsection above.

Once admitted, language and money were the two greatest obstacles. In addition, the students had to undergo a period of adjustment to a new educational system set in a radically different cultural environment. For example, they were used to distant and formal relationships between students and professors and had to adjust to the more relaxed and informal relationships at U.S. schools. The students, in general, have been highly motivated and doing good-to-excellent work, despite educational cultural differences. 58/

The Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges recently surveyed community college administrators to determine refugee enrollment and problems related to the influx in refugee enrollment. Colleges responding estimated a Spring 1979 enrollment of 5,296 and a Fall 1979 enrollment of 9,138, for a net increase of 3,842 refugee students. The percentage increase was 72.5 percent. (However, these data were incomplete since Los Angeles and San Francisco Community College Districts could not report enrollment data.)

English as a second language (ESL) programs were cited as the most serious problem area, with overcrowded classes and waiting lists being the norm. The need was recognized for faculty to become aware of the culture and problems of refugee students. The following support services are needed: foreign student counseling, interpreters, financial aid, health services, admissions (explicit guidelines on the tuition status of refugees do not exist), and child care. 59/

58/ John Martin. "Vietnamese Students and Their American Advisors." Change, Vol. 8, No. 10, November 1976, pp. 11-14.

59/ "Indochinese Refugees and Community Colleges," draft report by the California Community Colleges, December 19, 1979.

Adjustment. A study of 50 Vietnamese families in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, found that the Vietnamese have adjusted well in the United States. Persons showing the poorest adjustment were in the highest socioeconomic status in both Vietnam and the United States, and their adjustment was probably complicated by loss of professional role and identity. Although the families have accepted American social norms, they have been able to maintain their cultural identity. Unemployment and underemployment were major problems, and many women have been forced to seek employment to supplement the family income. This new "freedom" and changes in family structure for women were viewed favorably by them, but it was viewed negatively by the men. The men see the change in the role of women as being an erosion of the patriarchal family structure - it may be contributing to recently developing marital discord. 60/

In discussing all Indochinese refugees, Gail Magee, refugee coordinator for IRAP in Orange County, asserted:

"This is a sophisticated country, and it requires a lot of skill in understanding and manipulating the system so it works for you. When you consider how complicated this society is and how different it is from the one they left, they're doing amazingly well." 61/

60/ Joe Vignes and Richard C.W. Hall. "Adjustment of a Group of Vietnamese People to the United States." The American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 136, No. 4A, April 1979, pp. 442-444.

61/ Paul Galloway. Los Angeles Times, op. cit.

William Hoover, police chief in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, made an interesting and unique observation:

"If my family were suddenly plopped down in the middle of Vietnam, I'd have more trouble adjusting [than the Vietnamese have had in his city]." 62/

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS 63/

A. Cash Assistance, Medicaid, and Supportive Services

Since Congress in 1975 did not intend that the refugees became a burden on state or local resources, 100 percent federal funding was made available for cash and medical assistance programs. This assistance is provided by the DHEW's Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP), located in the Social Security Administration. In Fiscal Year 1979, the IRAP budget contained \$143.4 million, (\$66 for California) of which \$105.7 million (nearly 7.5 percent) were spent for financial and medical assistance to refugees and state administration of the program. The remaining \$37.8 million were expended under two categories: (1) \$30.2 million for various social services administered by state agencies largely through Title XX purchase of service contracts; and (2) \$7.5 million for special projects for English, employment training and mental health administered directly by DHEW. 64/ The purpose of these programs is to reduce dependency.

62/ John L. Moore. Wall Street Journal, op. cit.

63/ The unifying source for this section is Julia Vadala Taft and others, July 1979, op. cit.

64/ Secretarial Report, September 28, 1979, op. cit.

DHEW expects to commit \$412 million to funding the IRAP program in Fiscal Year 1980 (\$154 million for California). 65/ California Department of Social Services staff 66/ attribute this nearly three-fold increase over the preceding fiscal year to: increased number of refugees entering the country since the maximum was raised from 7 to 14,000 refugees per month, long stays on welfare for an increasing number of cases requiring such assistance, and the provision of expanded IRAP services. 67/

There are significant differences in the scope of services among states. According to a DHEW report, using 1978 data, Washington State had 75 percent more total IRAP funds than Texas, which had 2.5 times more refugees. Pennsylvania had received more than twice as much money as Louisiana, even though both had roughly equivalent refugee populations. 68/

These disparities are primarily due to different levels of cash/medical assistance and state initiative in seeking funds for refugee services. Benefit levels, coverage, and eligibility requirements vary substantially among the states and have a major effect on the ability of refugees to obtain needed services, such as English and job training, which are crucial

65/ Refugee Fact Sheet, op. cit.

66/ County Adult Programs Operations Bureau and Specialized Programs Bureau.

67/ These expanded services are: outreach, assessment, manpower employment, English as a second language instruction, vocational training, skills recertification, transportation, social adjustment (such as emergency and health-related services), and translation and interpreter services. See the Department of Social Services All-County Letter No. 80-29, concerning IRAP services, dated May 13, 1980.

68/ Secretarial Report, September 20, 1979, op. cit.

to facilitate long-term self-efficiency. Taft and her associates, in their Transcentary Foundation report, point out that these programs are 100 percent federally-funded, that state governments are not spending state funds. Therefore, they implicitly attribute the differences among the states to the philosophical and political approach of state agencies to the provision of publicly-funded programs and services.

Interestingly, in comparing the relative refugee position of the 10 states with the largest refugee populations with the relative aid payment position of the 10 states with the highest aid payments, not much overlap - and very little correlation - exists. When ranked by refugee population, California - the state with the biggest refugee population - is #4 in aid payment position. However, when ranked by aid payment position, California is #10. Only four states who are in the top 10 in relative refugee position are also in the top 10 in aid payment position. Among the top five states in each category, no overlap exists. These rankings, adapted from tabular data obtained from California Department of Social Services program staff, are given below: 69/

69/ County Adult Programs Operations Bureau, population data were for 1979, and payment data were for 1978.

TABLE 3.4

COMPARISON OF TOP TEN REFUGEE STATES WITH TOP TEN PAYMENT STATES

State	Ranking By Size Of Refugee Population		State	Ranking By Size Of Aid Payment	
	Refugee Position	Aid Payment Position		Aid Payment Position	Refugee Position
California	1	4	Hawaii	1	16
Texas	2	10	Connecticut	2	26
Pennsylvania	3	6	Vermont	3	50
Washington	4	2	Alaska	4	46
Illinois	5	8	New York	5	8
Louisiana	6	9	Wisconsin	6	18
Virginia	7	7	Michigan	7	13
New York	8	1	Washington	8	4
Oregon	9	5	Minnesota	9	10
Minnesota	10	3	California	10	1

B. Education. 70/ At the beginning of the first wave of Indochinese refugees in April 1975, California received 10,240 refugee students, kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12). These students enrolled in 323 school districts. By September 1977, the number of refugee students increased to 14,138, concentrated in 232 school districts. The increase in enrollment was due to the entry of additional refugees and secondary migration, with this latter phenomenon accounting for most of the increase. The decrease in the number of school districts was due to the fact that many refugees, who had originally located with sponsors, left their sponsors and moved to cities having special programs for their children or themselves or better job markets. This movement into California's two centers of refugee concentration--southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area--resulted in the concentration of the number of school districts with refugee students.

70/ The major source for this section is "Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Program (IRAP), a draft report by the Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education, California State Department of Education, dated January 1980.

In order to minimize the fiscal impact of refugees on local units of government, transitional federal financial assistance was made available to education agencies to help with the incremental costs of educating refugee children. Under the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP), Congress enacted the following legislation and appropriations--pertinent information for California is also given:

- o 1975-76 school year: PL 94-23 - \$3,850,000 were distributed to 10,241 refugee students (K-12) enrolled in 323 school districts.
- o 1976-77 school year: PL 94-405 - \$5,997,131 were distributed to 14,168 students enrolled in 234 school districts. Extended through September 1978.
- o 1978-79 school year: PL 95-561 (ESEA Title XIII, Part C) proposed funding for three more consecutive years. (September 1978 - October 1981), but no appropriation was made for 1978-79.
- o 1979-80 school year: The House Senate Committee agreed, in November 1979, to appropriate 12 million dollars for the program. The Appropriation Bill, PL 96-123, was signed by President Carter on November 20, 1979.

Since the 12 million dollars appropriated in PL 96-123 is insufficient to meet the needs of all refugee students, the bill included a statement stipulating priority for those eligible students who enrolled in school in the U.S. for the first time in the 1979-80 school year. (Results of a

California State Department of Education survey of the ten counties with the heaviest concentration of Indochinese students for the 1979-80 school year indicate that 12,000 to 13,000 students are enrolled for the first time.)

In addition to IRCAP, some California refugee children also benefit from services provided by the following:

- o Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I program funding. Funding for this compensatory education program is determined by calculating the number of children who are economically disadvantaged and receiving AFDC in a school district. Funds are usually used to purchase reading materials and reading programs, and occasionally to hire teacher's aides. The number of Indochinese refugee children covered by Title I funding is not readily available.
- o ESEA Title VII program funding. In 1979-80, eleven school districts in the state were awarded ESEA Title VII bilingual program funding for Indochinese. These programs serve about 4,500 refugee children.
- o The Office of Child Development. The State Department of Education has recently signed an agreement with the State Department of Social Services for administration of \$940,243 child development programs. The funds, made available as a result of the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, will be used to provide child care services to eligible children of Indochinese refugees. These child care services will support "income eligible" families in job training and employment

efforts. This funding will support an estimated 500 to 1,000 part-time and full-time children in Fiscal Year 1979-80 to receive care in centers as well as family day care homes.

The Indochinese community has received only a small share of DHEW's bilingual education program, which is designed to help ease non-English-speaking children into mainstream classrooms. Most program awards are made to school districts which offer services in only one language, usually Spanish. It is estimated that 29 percent of the awards was to be spent on Indochinese children. Surprisingly, no bilingual programs exist in such major Indochinese communities as Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago or anywhere in the State of Texas. 71/

With 25 percent of California's refugees and 2,584 students, when asked why Los Angeles does not have bilingual programs for Indochinese students, a California State Department of Education (SDE) representative replied that Los Angeles did not apply for Title VII funds. 72/ The most recent information available indicates that 13 school districts in California have bilingual programs, as follows: 73/

71/ Julia Vadala Taft and others, July 31, 1979, op. cit.

72/ It was also mentioned that Los Angeles loses millions of dollars annually (\$8 million in more recent fiscal year because of not complying with federal regulations).

73/ An updated listing of "State and Federally Funded Asian Bilingual Programs", Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education, State Department of Education.

<u>School Districts</u>	<u>Program Language</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Number of Schools</u>
Bellflower	Vietnamese	K-12	1
Monterey Peninsula	Vietnamese	K-6	2
Ocean View Elementary	Vietnamese	K-8	1
Oakland	Laotian	4, 7-9	3
	Vietnamese	K-4	
	Cambodian	K-6	
Orange	Vietnamese	K-6	6
Pomona	Vietnamese	K-8	8
Sacramento	Vietnamese	K-12	6
San Diego	Vietnamese		
	Laotian	K-12	4
	Cambodian		
San Francisco	Vietnamese	1-5, 7-12	5
Stockton	Indochinese languages	K-9	2
Westminster	Indochinese languages	K-8	4
Whittier	Vietnamese		
	Laotian	9-12	1
San Jose	Vietnamese	K-12	2

The following conclusions can be drawn from reviewing the information given above:

- o The number of school districts, and the number of schools within these districts, with bilingual programs is relatively small.
- o The program language is usually Vietnamese--only very infrequently is it Laotian or Combodian.
- o The grade levels with the program are variable--only four school districts have programs for K-12, and an additional two have programs for the upper grades only.

In general, the county and regional differences in programs are pronounced, with counties having programs initiated to serve the 1975 wave of refugees typically better than others.

The SDE report emphasizes that bilingual education is the "only viable way to help these refugee children develop English speaking skills" (p. 4). 74/ According to SDE data collected in the fall of 1977, there were 5,296 limited English speaking (37.3 percent) and 523 non-English speaking (3.7 percent) Vietnamese children in California's schools. The numbers of Cambodian, Laotian and Chinese speaking refugees were too small to analyze.) Approximately one and a half years later, according to a SDE spring 1979 census, there were 14,645 limited or non-English speaking students--7,426 were Vietnamese and the remaining 7,219 were ethnic Chinese (Catonese speaking). (Again, no meaningful data were available for other Indochinese students.) Since the most recent wave of immigration had not culminated before the census was taken, the number of limited and non-English speaking students are definitely higher than those reported above.

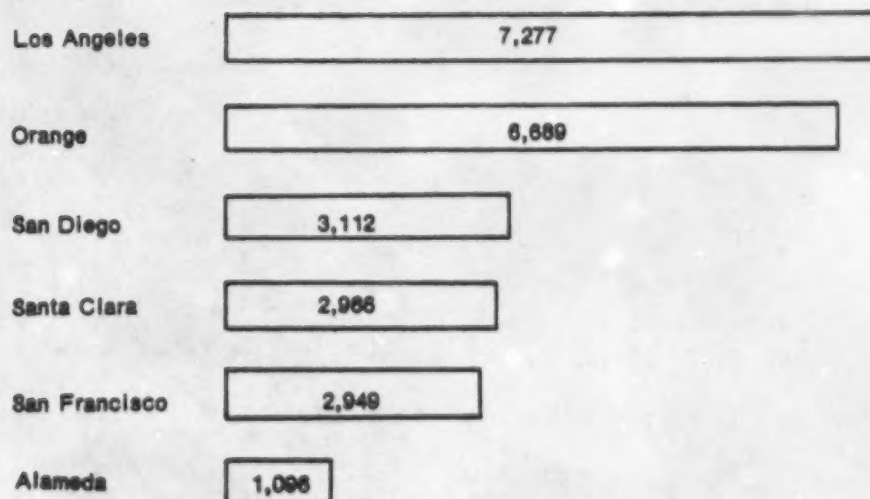
It should not be assumed that the lack of bilingual programs invariably mean that teaching is not being done in the children's native language. The Chacon-Marcone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act of 1976, AB 1329, is designed to provide limited English-speaking students with instructional services to enable them to learn English (in accordance with the mandate of the U.S. Supreme Court in Lau v. Nichols). Specifically, AB 1329 requires bilingual instruction in any school which has ten or more limited English-speaking students, with the same primary language, in the same grade in K-6.

74/ "Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Program", op. cit.

According to an enrollment report of Indochinese refugee children (K-12), 51 school districts had 100 or more Indochinese refugee students during 1979-80. ^{75/} The numbers ranged from 100 in Goleta Union Elementary (Santa Barbara County) to 2,663 in San Diego City Unified (San Diego County). Six counties had more than 1,000 Indochinese students during 1979-80, as illustrated below:

FIGURE 3.3

COUNTIES WITH OVER 1,000 INDOCHINESE STUDENTS



^{75/} Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education, California State Department of Education.

For 1979-80, there were 27,684 students (K-12) in 280 school districts. Thus, using the data from the SDE census, it can be estimated that 53 percent of the total refugee students require remedial English programs. United States Supreme Court Justice Douglas, in the opinion he delivered on the landmark case of Lau v. Nichols stated:

"There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum--for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

- C. Mental Health. Mental health problems have increased in the refugee population resettling in the United States since 1975. After a refugee's initial survival needs have been met, delayed symptoms of mental stress often surface. This phenomenon has been called "delayed depression" by Dr. Jean Carlin, a psychiatrist at the Drew School/Martin Luther King, Jr. General Hospital in Los Angeles and University of California at Irvine Medical School in Orange County. 76/

Recognizing these problems, DHEW provided \$2.1 million in Fiscal Year 1979 under the Special Projects Grant Program to fund mental health programs across the country. The emphasis of these programs has been to:

- o Train Indochinese mental health paraprofessionals,
- o Sensitize American mental health professionals to the specific needs of the Indochinese refugees, and

76/ Wall Street Journal. "Getting Settled" Vietnam Refugees Find It Hard to Adjust to U.S. Life", September 20, 1976.

- o Link refugee communities to existing public and private mental health systems. 77/

In papers delivered before the World Congress on Mental Health, and World Congress of Psychiatry, both in 1977, Norman V. Lourie, the Executive Deputy Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, suggests that the sudden uprooting of populations is:

"...accompanied by extreme and often lingering physical, psychosomatic, and social stress.... The Indochinese refugees who have arrived in the United States have been known to face a similarly broad range of both acute and chronic problems of identification and adjustment. Whether forced or voluntary, the precipitous departure from home and homeland has evoked the anxiety and insecurity inherent in the new and unknown. These responses are often reinforced by other evidence: the sense of isolation and abandonment felt by many Indochinese is exacerbated in the face of the unpredictable avalanche of social, vocational and economic problems. Apathy and depression, disappointment and anger, these and other psychological aspects of stress can be experienced along with a range of psychosomatic complaints." 78/

77/ Julia Vadala Taft and others, July 31, 1979, op. cit.

78/ As reported in Julia Vadala Taft, Ibid., p. 116.

In discussing "Health Issues Affecting Indochinese Children" at the National Organizations Advisory Council for Children Conference, on March 1980 in Los Angeles, Dr. Jean Carlin asserted that all refugees are depressed. The depression is caused, among other things, by decreasing status, the expectation that everyone coming to the United States would be wealthy, and the anticipation that life would be easy in this country. The refugees do not ask for psychiatric assistance--rather, they suffer in silence. A significant challenge to mental health professionals will be to develop treatment modalities based on Indochinese perspectives of mental health.

D. Unaccompanied Minors. The U.S. Department of State defines an Indochinese refugee unaccompanied minor as a person with these characteristics:

- (1) has not yet attained his or her 18th birthday, or the age of majority in the state in which he/she is residing,
- (2) has no known immediate adult relatives in the United States,
- (3) has been lawfully admitted to the United States in parole status, and
- (4) meets the general definition of a refugee: an alien who fled and cannot return to Indochina because of fear of persecution on account of race, religion, or political opinion. 79/

79/ "Refugee Act of 1979". Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, May 3, 10, 16, 23-24, 1979.

From April 1975 to December 1978, approximately 800 unaccompanied minors were admitted into this country. 80/ For calendar year 1979, it is estimated that an additional 1,000 minors were cleared for entry into the United States. The Federal Government made an early decision to provide 100 percent reimbursement for the care of these children, but they were caught between U.S. Immigration laws and state child welfare laws. The issue of legal responsibility for the children remained clouded and became so controversial that, during the summer of 1978, the volags refused to bring any more minors into the country until it was settled. The following policy was issued by DHEW on February 6, 1979:

"Voluntary resettlement agencies under contract with the State Department will facilitate the admission and placement of these children. Before a voluntary resettlement agency places an unaccompanied child in a community, (it) shall consult with appropriate state or local public child welfare authorities. There shall be arrangements made whereby the state or local public agency establishes legal responsibility for the care and maintenance of the unaccompanied minor. The purpose of establishing legal responsibility is to insure that the unaccompanied children receive the full range of assistance, care, and services to which any child in a state is entitled, and to designate a legal authority to act in place of the child's unavailable parent(s). This action should follow the process normally required by state law to establish protective legal responsibility for a minor child."

80/ The following information on unaccompanied minors is taken from Julia Vadala Taft and others, July 31, 1979, op. cit.

The action transmittal which clarified this policy also specified that 100 percent of the cost for child welfare services will be reimbursed by IRAP. Services include foster care maintenance, medical assistance, social services, and administrative costs. The preferred method of assisting these children is foster care. Other arrangements have included: placing foster children in the care of Indochinese families, placement in small group homes, and independent living arrangements.

Characteristics of Refugees Receiving Assistance

The goal of IRAP is to assist refugees in becoming self-sufficient and self-reliant. This goal is attained through: the provision of social services to help with adjustment, special refugee projects to prepare for employment, and a system of cash assistance which provides income to permit refugees to participate in the adjustment and employment effort. The California State Department of Social Services (DSS) administers the cash assistance element of IRAP through the county welfare departments, supervises the provision of social services in some counties through the county welfare departments, and contracts with 14 public and private agencies to provide services to refugees.

As of January 1980, the DSS estimated that 56 percent of the state's approximately 100,000 refugees were receiving cash assistance. 81/ This compares with 43 percent of the refugees in the nation. (It should be noted that this percentage has been increasing from less than one-third for the early arrivals. This increase is due to two main phenomena: (1) more of a cross section of persons are now resettling in the United States, and (2) long duration of welfare experience for some early arrivals, as will be discussed later in this section.) The difference between California and the United States is primarily due to the secondary migration phenomenon previously discussed in this report, where persons with multiple adjustment problems are migrating to California.

A total of 33,000 out of 49,000 refugee children in the state--66 percent--are in families receiving IRAP. Children contribute 50 percent of persons in California's general refugee population and 59 percent of the cash assistance recipients. Thus, children are more heavily represented in the IRAP population than they are in the general refugee population.

81/ All numbers for January 1980 were estimated by the Estimates Bureau, California State Department of Social Services, May 14, 1980.

A recent DSS report describes characteristics of IRAP recipients in California. 82/ The data, extracted from 573 IRAP case records in three selected counties, were considered to be representative of the state's total IRAP population. Nine "key items"--characteristics which were thought to be indicative of the ability of refugees to become self-sufficient--were highlighted in the report. Data were provided for December 1979 and December 1978 to reveal changes. Although one year is a relatively short time in investigating changes in characteristics, for five out of the nine "key items"--56 percent--there was a change in the negative direction-- that is, away from self-sufficiency. These items were (1) length of time in the U.S. (the less than one year category increased by 33 percentage points); (2) type of aid (8 percentage points increase for IRAP family cases and IRAP one person cases); (3) English speaking ability (14 percentage points increase in non-English speaking refugees); (4) monthly income other than IRAP (11 percentage points decrease); (5) and time before application for aid (increased by 15 percentage points). No change was evident over the one year period for all of the remaining four "key items" (family size, age, educational level, and employment status). These report highlights are fairly negative--not even in one "key item" did the data indicate a move toward self-sufficiency.

Looking at the IRAP caseload in December 1979, the typical refugee: 83/

o had been in the U.S. for less than one year (51 percent),

82/ Statistical Services Bureau. "Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program Characteristics Survey". California Department of Social Services, April 1, 1980.

83/ Ibid.

- o was an IRAP one-person case (33 percent),
- o originated from Vietnam (71 percent; 22 percent were from Laos, with the remaining seven percent being from Cambodia),
- o did not speak English (84 percent),
- o had between three and six persons in the household (51 percent, with an average of 5.8 persons) but had fewer persons in the Family Budget Unit (the average being 3.4 persons),
- o fell between the ages of 25 and 44 (53 percent, with the average being 33.5 years; these statistics are for the age of the oldest person in the FBU),
- o received a grant of \$373 (on the average) but did not have any additional income (78 percent),
- o had received aid for 14.1 months (on the average) since the most recent case opening,
- o had applied for aid within one month of arrival in California (82 percent),
- o attained less than 9th grade education level, or did not have any education at all, before arriving in the United States (30 percent),

o had been employed before arriving in the United States (52 percent), with the most frequent occupation being military service (12 percent), clerical, sales, or small business (9 percent) and professional/semi-professional (8 percent).

A very interesting table results when percent of time on aid is cross-classified by months in California. 84/ In general, the most recent arrivals are on aid a higher percentage of time than early arrivals--65 percent of the refugees residing in California, in December 1978, were on aid 95-100 percent of the time. However, the picture is bleak for the early arrivals--the middle and upper socioeconomic classes in Indochina. Nearly 55 percent of those living in California for three years, as of December 1978, had spent between 95 and 100 percent of their time on aid. Apparently, these educated/previously employed persons are having considerable difficulty leaving IRAP and becoming self-sufficient.

The foregoing picture should not be construed as being totally pessimistic. One bright spot: Barbara Hanes of the Orange County Welfare Department has reflected that refugees "go off welfare faster than any other group". 85/ In addition, refugees apparently prefer not to receive public assistance, as typified by the confession of a Hmong refugee:

"I feel bad about I cannot support myself. I feel I am not the good son of the family if I stay on welfare (p. 9)." 86/

84/ Table was obtained from County Adult Programs Operations Bureau, California Department of Social Services.

85/ William Wong. "Getting Settled: Vietnamese Refugees Find it Hard to Adjust to New Lives in the U.S." Wall Street Journal, September 20, 1978.

86/ DHEW Secretarial Report, op. cit.

APPENDIX

NAME _____
 TITLE _____
 ORGANIZATION/AFFILIATION _____
 TELEPHONE # _____ DATE _____

INDOCHINESE REFUGEE CHILDREN QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello, I'm _____ with the California State Dept. of Social Services. The Director of our Dept. has asked us to gather some information on Indochinese refugee children. He plans to use this information for program planning and policy development. Your help with the following few questions will make these endeavors easier.

The Director's primary concern is with the cultural conflicts that Indochinese children are having in assimilating into American culture.

- (1) I am going to read you a list of areas of conflict. Thinking about the population you serve, please tell me which are the three most critical areas of conflict, in order of importance, causing the most problems for the typical child. (Read list. Put a 1 next to most important area, 2 next to 2nd most important area, and 3 next to 3rd most important area.)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ___ a. Language difference | ___ h. Names |
| ___ b. Different rates of assimilation between parents and children | ___ i. Clothing |
| ___ c. Other family conflicts | ___ j. Toys and gifts |
| ___ d. Differences in learning and education | ___ k. Religion and beliefs |
| ___ e. Physical appearance | ___ l. Holidays and ceremonies |
| ___ f. Behavioral differences | ___ m. Social relationships |
| ___ g. Food | ___ n. Other, specify _____ |

- (2) Can you recommend some possible resolutions for these three areas of cultural conflict? (Ask about each area selected)

	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>If "yes", what?</u>
1st	___	___	_____
2nd	___	___	_____
3rd	___	___	_____

- (3) Which Indochinese group were you thinking of in naming the three areas? (Ask about each area selected).

	<u>NONE/ ALL CHILDREN</u>	<u>VIETNAMESE</u>	<u>LAOTIAN</u>	<u>CAMBODIAN</u>	<u>Other, write in for each area</u>
1st	___	___	___	___	_____
2nd	___	___	___	___	_____
3rd	___	___	___	___	_____

(4) What is the approximate average age of the children you serve? _____

(5) Are there any other critical problems that you would like to share with us?

NO _____

YES _____ If "yes", what? _____

(6) How would you categorize the typical refugee child's assimilation into American culture - would you say it was (read responses).

	All Children	What about for Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian children separately?			
		Viet.	Camb.	Lao.	Other, who?
Extremely good	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Good	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Poor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extremely Poor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Thank you for your assistance!

APPENDIX

INDOCHINESE REFUGEE CHILDREN

NAME _____

TITLE _____

AFFILIATION _____

TELEPHONE # _____ DATE _____

EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

- (1) The following possible problems for Indochinese students are given in articles and books. For each one, please tell me how much of a problem it is:

Always Usually Sometimes Never

- a. Incorrect grade placement:
 _____ Too high
 _____ Too low
- b. Grading system
- c. Numerous tests during semester
- d. General confusion about American educational system
- e. Reliance on classroom lectures, rather than textbooks
- f. Homogeneous school programs (which do not distinguish between SES and academic background) ...
- g. No official school records
- h. Sex education
- i. Non-separation of boys and girls
- j. Parental pressure to study/succeed
- k. Other pressure to succeed
- l. Study habits
- m. Passive relationship to teacher
- n. Embarrassment caused by names
- o. Shyness or inappropriate smiling
- p. Food and eating manners
- q. Racial prejudice
- r. Other

(2) How well would you say Indochinese children are integrating into our schools?

(a) Are there differences in integration among Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian children? _____

(b) Are there differences in integration between early and late arrivals? _____

(3) How well would you say Indochinese children are succeeding in our schools? _____

(a) Are there differences in success among Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian children? _____

(b) Are there differences in success between early and late arrivals? _____

(c) The literature says that children are succeeding because of hard work, discipline, and infrequent participation in extracurricular activities. Are there other factors? _____

(4) How much impact have Indochinese children had on schools in your county? _____

(a) Has the quality of education suffered? _____

(b) Do you have any special programs for these students? _____

(c) Have you received special funds to offset additional costs? _____

APPENDIX

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON UNACCOMPANIED INDOCHINESE REFUGEE CHILD

NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)		SEX
ALIAS NUMBER	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	BIRTHDATE (MONTH, DAY, YEAR)
NAME AND LAST KNOWN ADDRESS OF PARENTS OR RELATIVES		

* TYPE OF CURRENT PLACEMENT

☐ Foster Family
 ☐ Group Home
 ☐ Institution
 ☐ Supervised Independent Living

NAME AND ADDRESS OF FAMILY OR INSTITUTE WHERE CHILD IS RESIDING (IF SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING, DESCRIBE)

LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP IS HELD BY:

NAME OF SOCIAL AGENCY

ADDRESS

IS CHANGE IN STATUS OF LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP PLANNED?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

IF YES, WHAT CHANGE IS PLANNED? WHY?

Briefly describe the child's current functioning in terms of relationship with adults and peers; physical health; emotional well-being; knowledge of English language; and school achievement. (Use back of form if needed.)

Briefly describe the case plan for the child, including short-range and long-range objectives until the time it is anticipated the child will become independent. This should include information about educational and vocational plans. If problems are indicated, briefly describe the services to be provided. (Use back of form if needed.)

APPENDIX

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